WOODSTOCK;

OR,

THE CAVALIER.

631

A TALE

OF THE

YEAR SIXTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-ONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "WAVERLEY,
TALES OF THE CRUSADERS," &c.

He was a very perfect gentle Knight.
CHAUCER.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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CHAPTER I.

—— "She kneel'd, and saint-like
Cast her eyes to heaven, and pray'd devoutly."
King Henry VIII.

Colonel Everard's departure at the late hour, for so it was then thought, of seven in the evening, excited much speculation. There was a gathering of menials and dependents in the outer chamber, or hall, for no one doubted that his sudden departure was owing to his having, as they expressed it, "seen something," and all desired to know how a man of such acknowledged courage as Everard, looked under the awe of a recent apparition. But he gave them no time to make comments; for,

striding through the hall wrapt in his riding-suit, he threw himself on horseback, and rode furiously through the Chase, towards the hut of the keeper Joliffe.

It was the disposition of Markham Everard to be hot, keen, earnest, impatient, and decisive to a degree of precipitation. The acquired habits which education had taught, and which the strong moral and religious discipline of his sect had greatly strengthened, were such as to enable him to conceal, as well as to check, this constitutional violence, and to place him upon his guard against indulging it. But when in the high tide of violent excitation, the natural impetuosity of the young soldier's temper was sometimes apt to overcome these artificial obstacles, and then, like a torrent foaming over a wear, it became more furious, as if in revenge for the constrained calm which it had been for some time obliged to assume. In these instances he was accustomed to see only that point to which his thoughts were bent, and to move straight towards it, whether a moral object, or the storming of a breach, without either calcu-

lating, or even seeming to see, the difficulties which were before him.

At present, his ruling and impelling motive was to detach his beloved cousin, if possible, from the dangerous and discreditable machinations in which he suspected her to have engaged, or, on the other hand, to discover that she really had no concern with these stratagems. He should know how to judge of that in some measure, he thought, by finding her present or absent at the hut, towards which he was now galloping. He had read, indeed, in some ballad or minstrel's tale, of a singular deception practised on a jealous old man, by means of a subterranean communication between his house and that of a neighbour, which the lady in question made use of to present herself in the two places alternately, with such speed, and so much address, that, after repeated experiments, the dotard was deceived into the opinion, that his wife, and the lady who was so very like her, and to whom his neighbour paid so much attention, were two different persons. But in the present case there was no room for such a deception; the distance was too great, and as he took

by much the nearest way from the castle, and rode full speed, it would be impossible, he knew, for his cousin, who was a timorous horsewoman even by day-light, to have got home before him.

Her father might indeed be displeased at his interference; but what title had he to be so?—Was not Alice Lee the near relation of his blood, the dearest object of his heart, and would he now abstain from an effort to save her from the consequences of a silly and wild conspiracy, because the old knight's spleen might be awakened by Everard's making his appearance at their present dwelling contrary to his commands? No. He would endure the old man's harsh language, as he endured the blast of the autumn wind, which was howling around him, and swinging the crashing branches of the trees under which he passed, but could not oppose, or even retard his journey.

If he found not Alice, as he had reason to believe she would be absent, to Sir Henry Lee himself he would explain what he had witnessed. However she might have become accessory to the juggling tricks performed at Woodstock, he could not but think it was without her father's know-

ledge, so severe a judge was the old knight of female propriety, and so strict an assertor of female decorum. He would take the same opportunity, he thought, of stating to him the well-grounded hopes he entertained, that his dwelling at the Lodge might be prolonged, and the sequestrators removed from the royal mansion and domains, by other means than those of the absurd species of intimidation which seemed to be resorted to, to scare them from thence.

All this seemed to be so much within the line of his duty as a relative, that it was not until he halted at the door of the ranger's hut, and threw his bridle into Wildrake's hand, that Everard recollected the fiery, high, and unbending character of Sir Henry Lee, and felt, even when his fingers were on the latch, a reluctance to intrude himself upon the presence of the irritable old knight.

But there was no time for hesitation. Bevis, who had already bayed more than once from within the Lodge, was growing impatient, and Everard had but just time to bid Wildrake hold the horses until he should send Joceline to his assistance, when old Joan unpinned the door,

to demand who was without at that time of the night. To have attempted anything like an explanation with poor dame Joan, would have been quite hopeless; the Colonel, therefore, put her gently aside, and shaking himself loose from the hold she had laid on his cloak, entered the kitchen of Joceline's dwelling. Bevis, who had advanced to support Joan in her opposition, humbled his lion-port, with that wonderful instinct which makes his race remember so long those with whom they have been familiar, and acknowledged his master's relative, by doing homage in his fashion, with his head and tail.

Colonel Everard, more uncertain in his purpose every moment as the necessity of its execution drew nigh, stole over the floor like one who treads in a sick chamber, and opening the door of the interior apartment with a slow and trembling hand, as he would have withdrawn the curtains of a dying friend, he saw within the scene which we are about to describe.

Sir Henry Lee sat in a wicker arm-chair by the fire. He was wrapped in a cloak, and his limbs extended on a stool, as if he were suffering from

gout or indisposition. His long white beard flowing over the dark-coloured garment, gave him more the appearance of a hermit than of an aged soldier or man of quality; and that character was increased by the deep and devout attention with which he listened to a respectable old man, whose dilapidated dress showed still something of the clerical habit, and who, with a low, but full and deep voice, was reading the Evening Service according to the Church of England. Alice Lee kneeled at the feet of her father, and made the responses with a voice that might have suited the choir of angels; and a modest and serious devotion, which suited the melody of her tone. The face of the officiating clergyman would have been good-looking, had it not been disfigured with a black patch which covered the left eye and a part of his face, and had not the features which were visible been marked with the traces of care and suffering.

When Colonel Everard entered, the clergyman raised his finger, as cautioning him to forbear disturbing the divine service of the evening, and pointed to a seat; to which, struck deeply with the scene he had witnessed, the intruder stole with

as light a step as possible, and knelt devoutly down as one of the little congregation.

Everard had been bred by his father what was called a Puritan; a member of a sect, who, in the primitive sense of the word, were persons that did not except against the doctrines of the Church of England, or even in all respects against its hierarchy, but chiefly dissented from it on the subject of certain ceremonies, habits, and forms of ritual, which were insisted upon by the celebrated and unfortunate Laud, with ill-timed tenacity. But even if, from the habits of his father's house, Everard's opinions had been diametrically opposed to the doctrines of the English Church, he must have been reconciled to them by the regularity with which the service was performed in his uncle's family at Woodstock, who, during the blossom of his fortunes, generally had a chaplain residing in the Lodge for that special purpose.

Yet deep as was the habitual veneration with which he heard the impressive service of the Church, Everard's eyes could not help straying towards Alice, and his thoughts wandering to the purpose of his presence there. She seemed to

have recognised him at once, for there was a deeper glow than usual upon her cheek, her fingers trembled as they turned the leaves of her prayer-book, and her voice, lately as firm as it was melodious, faltered when she repeated the responses. It appeared to Everard, as far as he could collect by the stolen glances which he directed towards her, that the character of her beauty, as well as of her outward appearance, had changed with her fortunes.

The beautiful and high-born young lady had now approached as nearly as possible to the brown stuff dress of an ordinary village maiden; but what she had lost in gaiety of appearance, she had gained as it seemed in dignity. Her beautiful light-brown tresses, now folded around her head, and only curled where nature had so arranged them, gave her an air of simplicity, which did not exist when her head-dress showed the skill of a curious tirewoman. A light joyous air, with something of a humorous expression, which seemed to be looking for amusement, had vanished before the touch of affliction, and a calm melancholy supplied its place, which seemed on the

watch to administer comfort to others. Perhaps the former arch, though innocent expression of countenance, was uppermost in her lover's recollection, when he concluded that Alice had acted a part in the disturbances which had taken place at the Lodge. It is certain, that when he now looked upon her, it was with shame for having nourished such a suspicion, and the resolution to believe rather that the devil had imitated her voice, than that a creature, who seemed so much above the feelings of this world, and so nearly allied to the purity of the next, should have had the indelicacy to mingle in such manœuvres as he himself and others had been subjected to.

These thoughts shot through his mind, in spite of the impropriety of indulging them at such a moment. The service now approached the close; and a good deal to Colonel Everard's surprise as well as confusion, the officiating priest, in firm and audible tone, and with every attribute of dignity, prayed to the Almighty to bless and preserve "Our Sovereign Lord, King Charles, the lawful and undoubted King of these realms." The petition (in those days most dangerous) was pronounced with

a full, raised, and distinct articulation, as if the priest challenged all who heard him to dissent if they dared. If the republican officer did not assent to the petition, he thought at least it was no time to protest against it.

The service was concluded in the usual manner, and the little congregation arose. It now included Wildrake, who had entered during the latter prayer, and was the first of the party to speak, running up to the priest, and shaking him by the hand most heartily, swearing at the same time, that he truly rejoiced to see him. The good clergyman returned the pressure with a smile, observing he should have believed his asseveration without an oath. In the meanwhile, Colonel Everard, approaching his uncle's seat, made a deep inclination of respect, first to Sir Henry Lee, and then to Alice, whose colour now spread from her cheek to her brow and bosom.

"I have to crave your excuse," said the Colonel with hesitation, "for having chosen for my visit, which I dare not hope would be very agreeable at any time, a season most peculiarly unsuitable."

"So far from it, nephew," answered Sir Henry, with much more mildness of manner than Everard had dared to expect, "that your visits at other times would be much more welcome, had we the fortune to see you often at our hours of worship."

"I hope the time will soon come, sir, when Englishmen of all sects and denominations," replied Everard, "will be free in conscience to worship in common the great Father, whom they all after their manner call by that affectionate name."

"I hope so too, nephew," said the old man in the same unaltered tone; "and we will not at present dispute, whether you would have the Church of England coalesce with the Conventicle, or the Conventicle conform to the Church. It was, I ween, not to settle jarring creeds, that you have honoured our poor dwelling, where, to say the truth, we dared scarce have expected to see you again, so coarse was our last welcome."

"I should be happy to believe," said Colonel Everard, hesitating, "that—that—in short my presence was not now so unwelcome here as on that occasion."

"Nephew," said Sir Henry, "I will be frank with you. When you were last here, I thought you had stolen from me a precious pearl, which at one time it would have been my pride and happiness to have bestowed on you; but which, being such as you have been of late, I would bury in the depths of the earth rather than give to your keeping. This somewhat chafed, as honest Will says, 'the rash humour which my mother gave me.' I thought I was robbed, and I thought I saw the robber before me. I am mistaken—I am not robbed; and the attempt without the deed I can pardon."

"I would not willingly seek offence in your words, sir," said Colonel Everard, "when their general purport sounds kind; but I can protest before Heaven, that my views and wishes towards you and your family are as void of selfish hopes and selfish ends, as they are fraught with love to you and to yours."

"Let us hear them, man; we are not much accustomed to good wishes now-a-days; and their very rarity will make them welcome."

"I would willingly, Sir Henry, since you might

not choose me to give you a more affectionate name, convert those wishes into something effectual for your comfort. Your fate, as the world now stands, is bad, and, I fear, like to be worse."

"Worse than I expect it cannot be. Nephew, I do not shrink before my change of fortunes. I shall wear coarser clothes,—I shall feed on more ordinary food,—men will not doff their cap to me as they were wont, when I was the great and the wealthy. What of that? Old Harry Lee loved his honour better than his title, his faith better than his land and lordship. Have I not seen the 30th of January? I am neither Philo-math nor astrologer; but old Will teaches me, that when green leaves fall winter is at hand, and that darkness will come when the sun sets."

"Bethink you, sir," said Colonel Everard, "if, without any submission asked, any oath taken, any engagement imposed, express or tacit, excepting that you are not to excite disturbances in the public peace, you can be restored to your residence in the Lodge, and your usual fortunes and perquisites there—I have great reason to hope

this may be permitted, if not expressly, at least on sufferance."

"Yes, I understand you. I am to be treated like the royal coin, marked with the ensign of the Rump to make it pass current, although I am too old to have the royal insignia grinded off from me? Kinsman, I will have none of this. I have lived at the Lodge too long; and let me tell you, I had left it in scorn long since, but for the orders of one whom I may yet live to do service to. I will take nothing from the usurpers, be their name Rump or Cromwell—be they one devil or legion—I will not take from them an old cap to cover my grey hairs—a cast cloak to protect my frail limbs from the cold. They shall not say they have, by their unwilling bounty, made Abraham rich—I will live, as I will die, the Loyal Lee."

"May I hope you will think of it, sir; and that you will, perhaps, considering what slight submission is asked, give me a better answer?"

"Sir, if I retract my opinion, which is not my wont, you shall hear of it.—And now, cousin, have you more to say? We keep that worthy clergyman in the outer room."

"Something I had to say—something touching my cousin Alice," said Everard, with embarrassment; "but I fear that the prejudices of both are so strong against me——"

"Sir, I dare turn my daughter loose to you—I will go join the good doctor in dame Joan's apartment. I am not unwilling that you should know that the girl hath, in all reasonable sort, the exercise of her free will."

He withdrew, and left the cousins together.

Colonel Everard advanced to Alice, and was about to take her hand. She drew back, took the seat which her father had occupied, and pointed out to him one at some distance.

"Are we then so much estranged, my dearest Alice?" he said.

"We will speak of that presently," she replied. "In the first place, let me ask the cause of your visit here at so late an hour."

"You heard," said Everard, "what I stated to your father?"

"I did; but that seems to have been only part of your errand—something there seemed to be which applied particularly to me."

"It was a fancy—a strange mistake," answered Everard. "May I ask if you have been abroad this evening?"

"Certainly not," she replied. "I have small temptation to wander from my present home, poor as it is; and whilst here, I have important duties to discharge. But why does Colonel Everard ask so strange a question?"

"Tell me in turn, why your cousin Markham has lost the name of friendship and kindred, and even of some nearer feeling, and then I will answer you, Alice."

"It is soon answered," she said. "When you drew your sword against my father's cause—almost against his person—I studied, more than I should have done, to find excuse for you. I knew, that is, I thought I knew, your high feelings of public duty—I knew the opinions in which you had been bred up; and I said, I will not, even for this, cast him off—he opposes his King because he is loyal to his country. You endeavoured to avert the great and concluding tragedy of the 30th of January; and it confirmed me in my opi-

nion, that Markham Everard might be misled, but could not be base or selfish."

"And what has changed your opinion, Alice? or who dare," said Everard, reddening, "attach such epithets to the name of Markham Everard?"

"I am no subject," she said, "for exercising your valour, Colonel Everard, nor do I mean to offend. But you will find enough of others who will avow, that Colonel Everard is truckling to the usurper Cromwell, and that all his fair pretexts of forwarding his country's liberties, are but a screen for driving a bargain with the successful encroacher, and obtaining the best terms he can for himself and his family."

"For myself—Never!"

"But for your family you have—Yes, I am well assured that you have pointed out to the military tyrant, the way in which he and his satraps may master the government. Do you think my father or I would accept an asylum purchased at the price of England's liberty, and your honour?"

"Gracious Heaven, Alice, what is this? you accuse me of pursuing the very course which so lately had your approbation!"

"When you spoke with authority of your father, and recommended our submission to the existing government, such as it was, I own I thought—that my father's grey head might, without dishonour, have remained under the roof where it had so long been sheltered. But did your father sanction your becoming the adviser of yonder ambitious soldier to a new course of innovation, and his abettor in the establishment of a new species of tyranny?—It is one thing to submit to oppression, another to be the agent of tyrants—And O, Markham—their blood-hound!"

"How! blood-hound?—what mean you?—I own it is true I could see with content the wounds of this bleeding country stanched, even at the expense of beholding Cromwell, after his matchless rise, take a yet farther step to power—but to be his blood-hound! What is your meaning?"

"It is false, then?—I thought I could swear it had been false."

"What, in the name of God, is it you ask?"

"It is false that you are engaged to betray the young King of Scotland?"

"Betray him! *I* betray him, or any fugitive? Never! I would he were well out of England—I would lend him my aid to escape, were he in the house at this instant; and think I did his enemies good service, by preventing their soiling themselves with his blood—but betray him, never!"

"I knew it—I was sure it was impossible. Oh, be yet more honest; disengage yourself from yonder gloomy and ambitious soldier! Shun him and his schemes, which are formed in injustice, and can only be realized in yet more blood."

"Believe me," replied Everard, "that I choose the line of policy best befitting the times."

"Choose that," she said, "which best befits duty, Markham—which best befits truth and honour. Do your duty, and let Providence decide the rest.—Farewell! we tempt my father's patience too far—you know his temper—farewell, Markham."

She extended her hand, which he pressed to his lips, and left the apartment. A silent bow to his

uncle, and a sign to Wildrake, whom he found in the kitchen of the cabin, were the only tokens of recognition exhibited, and leaving the hut, he was soon mounted, and, with his companion, advanced on his return to the Lodge.

CHAPTER II.

——————— Deeds are done on earth,
Which have their punishment ere the earth closes
Upon the perpetrators. Be it the working
Of the remorse-stirr'd fancy, or the vision,
Distinct and real, of unearthly being,
All ages witness, that beside the couch
Of the fell homicide oft stalks the ghost
Of him he slew, and shows the shadowy wound.

Old Play.

Everard had come to Joceline's Lodge as fast as horse could bear him, and with the same impetuosity of purpose as of speed. He saw no choice in the course to be pursued, and felt in his own imagination the strongest right to direct, and even reprove, his cousin, beloved as she was, on account of the dangerous machinations with which she appeared to have connected herself. He returned slowly, and in a very different mood.

Not only had Alice, prudent as beautiful, appeared completely free from the weakness of conduct which seemed to give him some authority over her, but her views of policy, if less practi-

cable, were so much more direct and noble than his own, as led him to question whether he had not compromised himself too rashly with Cromwell, even although the state of the country was so greatly divided and torn by faction, that the promotion of the General to the possession of the executive government seemed the only chance of escaping a renewal of the Civil War. The more exalted and purer sentiments of Alice lowered him in his own eyes; and though unshaken in his opinion, that it were better the vessel should be steered by a pilot having no good title to the office, than that she should run upon the breakers, he felt that he was not espousing the most direct, manly, and disinterested side of the question.

As he rode on, immersed in these unpleasant contemplations, and considerably lessened in his own esteem by what had happened, Wildrake, who rode by his side, and was no friend to long silence, began to enter into conversation. "I have been thinking, Mark," said he, "that if you and I had been called to the bar—as, by the by, has been in danger of happening to me in more

senses than one—I say, had we become barristers, I would have had the better oiled tongue of the two—the fairer art of persuasion."

"Perhaps so," replied Everard, "though I never heard thee use any, save to induce an usurer to lend thee money, or a taverner to abate a reckoning."

"And yet this day, or rather night, I could have, as I think, made a conquest which baffled you."

"Indeed?" said the Colonel, becoming attentive.

"Why, look you," said Wildrake, "it was a main object with you to induce Mistress Alice Lee—By Heaven, she is an exquisite creature—I approve of your taste, Mark—I say, you desired to persuade her, and the stout old Trojan her father, to consent and return to the Lodge, and live there quietly, and under connivance, like gentlefolk, instead of lodging in a hut hardly fit to harbour a Tom of Bedlam."

"Thou art right; such, indeed, was a great part of my object in this visit," answered Everard.

"But, perhaps, you also expected to visit there yourself, and so keep watch over pretty Mistress Lee—eh?"

"I never entertained so selfish a thought," said Everard; "and if this nocturnal disturbance at the mansion were explained and ended, I would instantly take my departure."

"Your friend Noll would expect something more from you," said Wildrake—"he would expect, in case the knight's reputation for loyalty should draw any of our poor exiles and wanderers about the Lodge, that you should be on the watch, and ready to snap them. In a word—as far as I can understand his long-winded speeches—he would have Woodstock a trap, your uncle and his pretty daughter the bait of toasted cheese—craving your Chloe's pardon for the comparison—you the spring-fall which should bar their escape—his Lordship himself being the great grimalkin to whom they are to be given over to be devoured."

"Dared Cromwell mention this to thee in express terms?" said Everard, pulling up his horse, and stopping in the midst of the road.

"Nay, not in express terms, which I do not believe he ever used in his life—you might as well expect a drunken man to go straight forward; but he insinuated as much to me, and indicated that you might deserve well of him—Gatzo—the damnable proposal sticks in my throat—by betraying our noble and rightful King, (here he pulled off his hat,) whom God grant in health and wealth long to reign, as the worthy clergyman says, though I fear just now his Majesty is both sick and sorry, and never a penny in his pouch to boot."

"This tallies with what Alice hinted," said Everard; "but how could she know it? didst thou give her any hint of such a thing?"

"I?" replied the cavalier, "I, who never saw Mistress Alice in my life till to-night, and then only for an instant—zooks, man, how is that possible?"

"True," replied Everard, and seemed lost in thought. At length he spoke—"I should call Cromwell to account for his bad opinion of me; for even though not seriously expressed, but, as I am convinced it was, with the sole view of pro-

ving you, and perhaps myself, it was, nevertheless, a misconstruction to be resented."

"I'll carry a cartel for you, with all my heart and soul," said Wildrake; "and turn out with his godliness's second, with as good will as I ever drank a glass of sack."

"Pshaw," replied Everard, "those in his high place fight no singular combats.—But tell me, Roger Wildrake, didst thou thyself think me capable of the falsehood and treachery implied in such a message?"

"I?" exclaimed Wildrake.—"Markham Everard, you have been my early friend, my constant benefactor. When Colchester was reduced, you saved me from the gallows, and since that thou hast twenty times saved me from starving. But, by Heaven, if I thought you capable of such villainy as your General recommended,—by yonder blue sky, and all the works of creation which it bends over, I would stab you with my own hand!"

"Death," replied Everard, "I should indeed deserve, but not from you perhaps;—but fortunately, I cannot, if I would, be guilty of the

treachery you would punish. Know that I had this day secret notice, and from Cromwell himself, that the young man has escaped by sea from Bristol."

"Now, God Almighty be blessed, who protected him through so many dangers!" exclaimed Wildrake.—"Huzza!—Up hearts, cavaliers!—Hey for cavaliers!—God bless King Charles!—Moon and stars, catch my hat!"—and he threw it up as high as he could into the air. The celestial bodies which he invoked did not receive the present dispatched to them; but, as in the case of Sir Henry Lee's scabbard, an old gnarled oak became a second time the receptacle of a waif and stray of loyal enthusiasm. Wildrake looked rather foolish at the circumstance, and his friend took the opportunity of admonishing him.

"Art thou not ashamed to bear thee so like a school-boy?"

"Why," said Wildrake, "I have but sent a Puritan's hat upon a loyal errand. I laugh to think how many of the schoolboys thou talk'st of will be cheated into climbing the pollard next

year, expecting to find the nest of some unknown bird in yonder unmeasured margin of felt."

"Hush now, for God's sake, and let us speak calmly," said Everard. "Charles has escaped, and I am glad of it. I would willingly have seen him on his father's throne by composition, but not by the force of the Scottish army, and the incensed and vengeful royalists——"

"Master Markham Everard," began the cavalier, interrupting him——

"Nay, hush, dear Wildrake," said Everard; "let us not dispute a point on which we cannot agree, and give me leave to go on.—I say, since the young man has escaped, Cromwell's offensive and injurious stipulation falls to the ground; and I see not why my uncle and his family should not again enter their own house, under the same terms of connivance as many other royalists. What may be incumbent on me is different, nor can I determine my course until I have an interview with the General, which, as I think, will end in his confessing that he threw in this offensive proposal to sound us both. It is much in his

manner; for he is blunt, and never sees or feels the punctilious honour which the gallants of the day stretch to such delicacy."

"I'll acquit him for having any punctilio about him," said Wildrake, "either touching honour or honesty.—Now, to come back to where we started.—Supposing you were not to reside in person at the Lodge, and to forbear even visiting there, unless on invitation, when such a thing can be brought about, I tell you frankly, I think your uncle and his daughter might be induced to come back to the Lodge, and reside there as usual. At least the clergyman, that worthy old cock, gave me to hope as much."

"He had been hasty in bestowing his confidence," said Everard.

"True," replied Wildrake; "he confided in me at once; for he instantly saw my regard for the church. I thank Heaven I never passed a clergyman in his canonicals without pulling my hat off—(and thou knowest, the most desperate duel I ever fought was with young Grayless of the Inner Temple, for taking the wall of the Reverend Dr Bunce.)—Ah, I can gain a chaplain's ear in-

stantly.—Gadzooks, they know whom they have to trust to in such a one as I."

"Dost thou think then," said Colonel Everard, "or rather does this clergyman think, that if they were secure of intrusion from me, the family would return to the Lodge, supposing the intruding Commissioners gone, and this nocturnal disturbance explained and ended?"

"The old Knight," answered Wildrake, "may be wrought upon by the Doctor to return, if he is secure against intrusion. As for disturbances, the stout old boy, so far as I can learn in two minutes' conversation, laughs at all this turmoil as the work of mere imagination, the consequence of the remorse of their own evil consciences; and says, that goblin or devil was never heard of at Woodstock, until it became the residence of such men as they, who have now usurped the possession."

"There is more than imagination in it," said Everard. "I have personal reason to know there is some conspiracy carrying on, to render the house untenantable by the Commissioners. I acquit my uncle of accession to such a silly trick;

but I must see it ended ere I can agree to his and my cousin's residing where such a confederacy exists; for they are likely to be considered as the contrivers of such pranks, be the actual agent who he may."

"With reverence to your better acquaintance with the gentleman, Everard, I should rather suspect the old father of Puritans (I beg your pardon again) has something to do with the business; and if so, Lucifer will never look near the true old Knight's beard, nor abide a glance of yonder maiden's innocent blue eyes. I will uphold them as safe as pure gold in a miser's chest."

"Sawest thou aught thyself, which makes thee think thus?"

"Not a quill of the devil's pinion saw I," replied Wildrake. "He supposes himself too secure of an old cavalier, who must steal, hang, or drown in the long run, so he gives himself no trouble to look after the assured booty. But I heard the serving-fellows prate of what they had seen and heard; and though their tales were confused enough, yet if there was any truth among them

at all, I should say the devil must have been in the dance.—But, hollo! here comes some one upon us.—Stand, friend—who art thou?"

"A poor day-labourer in the great work of England—Joseph Tomkins by name—Secretary to a godly and well-endowed leader in this poor Christian army of England, called General Harrison."

"What news, Master Tomkins?" said Everard; "and why are you on the road at this late hour?"

"I speak to the worthy Colonel Everard, as I judge," said Tomkins; "and truly I am glad of meeting your honour.—Heaven knows, I need such assistance as yours.—Oh worthy Master Everard!—Here has been a sounding of trumpets, and a breaking of vials, and a pouring forth, and——"

"Prithee, tell me, in brief, what is the matter—where is thy master—and, in a word, what has happened?"

"My master is close by, parading it in the little meadow, beside the hugeous oak, which is called by the name of the late Man; ride but two steps forward, and you may see him walking

swiftly to and fro, advancing all the while the naked weapon."

Upon proceeding as directed, but with as little noise as possible, they descried a man, whom of course they concluded must be Harrison, walking to and fro beneath the King's Oak, as a sentinel under arms, but with more wildness of demeanour. The tramp of the horses did not escape his ear; and they heard him call out, as if at the head of the brigade—"Lower pikes against cavalry!—Here comes Prince Rupert—Stand fast, and you shall turn them aside, as a bull would toss a cur-dog.—Lower your pikes still, my hearts, the end secured against your foot—down on your right knee, front rank—spare not for the spoiling of your blue aprons.—Ha—Zerobabel—ay, that is the word."

"In the name of Heaven, about whom or what is he talking?" said Everard; "wherefore does he go about with his weapon drawn?"

"Truly, sir, when aught disturbs my master General Harrison, he is something rapt in the spirit, and conceives that he is commanding a reserve of pikes at the great battle of Armageddon—and for his weapon, alack, worthy sir, wherefore

should he keep Sheffield steel in calves' leather, when there are fiends to be combated—incarnate fiends on earth, and raging infernal fiends under the earth?"

"This is intolerable," said Everard. "Listen to me, Tomkins. Thou art not now in the pulpit, and I desire none of thy preaching language. I know thou canst speak intelligibly when thou art so minded. Remember, I may serve or harm thee; and as you hope or fear anything on my part, answer straight-forward—What has happened to drive out thy master to the wild wood at this time of night?"

"Forsooth, worthy and honoured sir, I will speak with the precision I may. True it is, and of verity, that the breath of man, which is in his nostrils, goeth forth and returneth——"

"Hark you, sir," said Colonel Everard, "take care where you ramble in your correspondence with me. You have heard how at the great battle of Dunbar in Scotland, the General himself held a pistol to the head of Lieutenant Hewcreed, threatening to shoot him through the brain if he did not give up holding forth, and put his squadron in line to the front. Take care, sir."

"Verily, the lieutenant then charged with an even and unbroken order," said Tomkins, "and bore a thousand plaids and bonnets over the beach before him into the sea. Neither shall I pretermit or postpone your honour's commands, but speedily obey them, and that without delay."

"Go to, fellow; thou knowest what I would have," said Everard; "speak at once—I know thou canst if thou wilt. Trusty Tomkins is better known than he thinks for."

"Worthy sir," said Tomkins, in a much less periphrastic style, "I will obey your worship as far as the spirit will permit. Truly, it was not an hour since, when my worshipful master being at table with Master Bibbet and myself, not to mention the worshipful Master Bletson and Colonel Desborough, and behold there was a violent knocking at the gate, as of one in haste. Now, of a certainty, so much had our household been harassed with witches and spirits, and other objects of sound and sight, that the sentinels could not be brought to abide upon their posts without doors, and it was only by provision of beef and strong liquors that we were able to maintain a guard of three men in the hall, who neverthe-

less ventured not to open the door, lest they should be surprised with some of the goblins wherewith their imaginations were overwhelmed. And they heard the knocking, which increased until it seemed that the door was well nigh about to be beaten down. Worthy Master Bibbet was a little overcome with liquor, (as is his fashion, good man, about this time of the evening,) not that he is in the least given to ebriety, but simply, that since the Scottish campaign he hath had a perpetual ague, which obliges him so to nourish his frame against the damps of the night; wherefore, as it is well known to your honour that I discharge the office of a faithful servant, as well to Major-General Harrison, and the other Commissioners, as to my just and lawful master, Colonel Desborough——"

"I know all that.—And now that thou art trusted by both, I pray to Heaven thou may'st merit the trust," said Colonel Everard.

"And devoutly do I pray," said Tomkins, "that your worshipful prayers may be answered with favour; for certainly to be, and to be called and entitled, Honest Joe, and Trusty Tomkins, is to me more than ever would be an Earl's title,

were such things to be granted anew in this regenerated government."

"Well, go on—go on—or if thou dalliest much longer, I will make bold to dispute the article of your honesty. I like short tales, sir, and doubt what is told with a long unnecessary train of words."

"Well, good sir, be not hasty. As I said before, the doors rattled till you would have thought the knocking was reiterated in every room of the Palace. The bell rung out for company, though we could not find that any one tolled the clapper, and the guards let off their firelocks, merely because they knew not what better to do. So, Master Bibbet being, as I said, unsusceptible of his duty, I went down with my poor rapier to the door, and demanded who was there; and I was answered in a voice, which, I must say, was much like another voice, that it was one wanting Major-General Harrison. So as it was then late, I answered mildly, that General Harrison was betaking himself to his rest, and that any who wished to speak to him must return on the morrow morning, for that after nightfall the door of the Palace, being in the room of a garrison, would

be opened to no one. So the voice replied, and bid me open directly, without which he would blow the folding leaves of the door into the middle of the hall. And therewithal the noise recommenced, that we thought the house would have fallen; and I was in some measure constrained to open the door, even like a besieged garrison which can hold out no longer."

"By my honour, and it was stoutly done of you I must say," said Wildrake, who had been listening with much interest. "I am a bold dare-devil enough, yet when I had two inches of oak plank between the actual fiend and me, hang him that would demolish the barrier between us, say I—I would as soon, when aboard, bore a hole in the ship, and let in the waves; for you know we always compare the devil to the deep sea."

"Pr'ythee, peace, Wildrake," said Everard, "and let him on with his history.—Well, and what saw'st thou when the door was opened? —the great Devil with his horns and claws thou wilt say, no doubt."

"No, sir, I will say nothing but what is true: When I undid the door, one man stood there, and he, to seeming, a man of no extraordinary

appearance. He was wrapped in a taffeta cloak, of a scarlet colour, and with a red lining. He seemed as if he might have been in his time a very handsome man, but there was something of paleness and sorrow in his face—a long love-lock and long hair he wore, even after the abomination of the cavaliers, and the unloveliness, as learned Master Prynne well termed it, of love-locks—a jewel in his ear—a blue scarf over his shoulder, like a military commander for the King, and a hat with a white plume, bearing a peculiar hatband."

"Some unhappy officer of cavaliers, of whom so many are in hiding, and seeking shelter through the country," briefly replied Everard.

"True, worthy sir—right as a judicious exposition. But there was something about this man (if he was a man), whom I, for one, could not look upon without trembling; nor the musketeers who were in the hall, without betraying much alarm, and swallowing, as they themselves will aver, the very bullets which they had in their mouths for loading their carabines and muskets. Nay, the wolf and deer-dogs, that are

the fiercest of their kind, fled from this visitor, and crept into holes and corners, moaning and wailing in a low and broken tone. He came into the middle of the hall, and still he seemed no more than an ordinary man, only somewhat fantastically dressed, in a doublet of black velvet pinked upon scarlet satin under his cloak, a jewel in his ear, with large roses in his shoes, and a kerchief in his hand, which he sometimes pressed against his left side."

"Gracious Heaven!" said Wildrake, coming close up to Everard, and whispering in his ear, with accents which terror rendered tremulous, (a mood of mind most unusual to the daring man, who seemed now overcome by it,)—"it must have been poor Dick Robison the player, in the very dress in which I have seen him play Philaster—ay, and drank a jolly bottle with him after it at the Mermaid! I remember how many frolicks we had together, and all his little fantastic fashions. He served for his old master, Charles, in Mohun's troop, and was murdered by this butcher's dog, as I have heard, after surrender, at the battle of Naseby-field."

"Hush! I have heard of the deed," said Everard; "for God's sake hear the man to an end.—Did this visitor speak to thee, my friend?"

"Yes, sir, in a pleasing tone of voice, but somewhat fanciful in the articulation, and like one who is speaking to an audience as from a bar or a pulpit, more than in the voice of ordinary men on ordinary matters. He desired to see Major-General Harrison."

"He did!—and you," said Everard, infected by the spirit of the time, which, as is well known, leaned to credulity upon all matters of supernatural agency,—"what did you do?"

"I went up to the parlour, and related that such a person inquired for him. He started when I told him, and eagerly desired to know the man's dress; but no sooner did I mention his dress, and the jewel in his ear, than he said, 'Begone! tell him I will not admit him to speech of me. Say that I defy him, and will make my defiance good at the great battle in the valley of Armageddon, when the voice of the angel shall call all fowls which fly under the face of heaven to feed on the flesh of the captain and the sol-

dier, the war-horse and his rider. Say to the Evil One, I have power to appeal our conflict even till that day, and that in the front of that fearful day he will again meet with Harrison.' I went back with this answer to the stranger, and his face was writhed into such a deadly frown as a mere human brow hath seldom worn. 'Return to him,' he said, 'and say it is MY HOUR; and that if he come not instantly down to speak with me, I will mount the stairs to him. Say that I COMMAND him to descend, by the token, that, on the field of Naseby, *he did not the work negligently*.'"

"I have heard," whispered Wildrake,—who felt more and more strongly the contagion of superstition,—"that these words were blasphemously used by Harrison when he shot my poor friend Dick."

"What happened next?" said Everard. "See that thou speakest the truth."

"As gospel unexpounded by a steeple-man," said the independent; "yet truly it is but little I have to say. I saw my master come down, with a blank, yet resolved air; and when he entered the hall and saw the stranger, he made a

pause. The other waved on him as if to follow, and walked out at the portal. My worthy patron seemed as if he were about to follow, yet again paused, when this visitant, be he man or fiend, re-entered, and said, 'Obey thy doom.

'By pathless march, by greenwood tree,
It is thy weird to follow me—
To follow me through the ghastly moonlight—
To follow me through the shadows of night—
To follow me, comrade, still art thou bound:
I conjure thee by the unstaunched wound—
I conjure thee by the last words I spoke,
When the body slept and the spirit awoke,
In the very last pangs of the deadly stroke.'

So saying, he stalked out, and my master followed him into the wood.—I followed also at a distance. But when I came up, my master was alone, and bearing himself as you now behold him."

"Thou hast had a wonderful memory, friend," said the Colonel, coldly, "to remember these rhymes in a single recitation—there seems something of practice in all this."

"A single recitation, my honoured sir?" exclaimed the independent,—"alack, the rhyme is seldom out of my poor master's mouth, when, as sometimes haps, he is less triumphant in his

wrestles with Satan. But it was the first time I ever heard it uttered by another; and, to say truth, he ever seems to repeat it unwillingly, as a child after his pedagogue, and as it was not indited by his own head, as the Psalmist saith."

"It is strange," said Everard,—"I have heard and read that the spirits of the slaughtered have strange power over the slayer; but I am astonished to believe there may be truth in such tales. —Roger Wildrake—what art thou afraid of, man?—why dost thou shift thy place thus?"

"Fear? it is not fear—it is hate, deadly hate. —I see the murderer of poor Dick before me, and—see, he throws himself into a posture of fence —Sa—sa—say'st thou, brood of a butcher's mastiff? thou shalt not want an antagonist."

Ere any one could stop him, Wildrake threw aside his cloak, drew his sword, and almost with a single bound cleared the distance betwixt him and Harrison, and crossed swords with the latter, as he stood brandishing his weapon, as if in immediate expectation of an assailant. Accordingly, the Republican General was not for an instant taken at unawares, but the moment the swords clashed, he shouted, "Ha! I feel thee

now, thou hast come in body at last.—Welcome! welcome!—the sword of the Lord and of Gideon!"

"Part them, part them," cried Everard, as he and Tomkins, at first astonished at the suddenness of the affray, hastened to interfere. Everard, seizing on the cavalier, drew him forcibly backwards, while Tomkins contrived, with risk and difficulty, to master Harrison's sword, while the General exclaimed, "Ha! two to one—two to one!—thus fight demons." Wildrake, on his side, swore a dreadful oath, and added, "Markham, you have cancelled every obligation I owed you—they are all out of sight—gone, d—n me."

"You have indeed acquitted these obligations rarely," said Everard. "Who knows how this affair shall be explained and answered?"

"I will answer it with my life," said Wildrake.

"Good now, be silent," said Tomkins, "and let me manage. It shall be so ordered that the good General shall never know that he hath encountered with a mortal man; only let that man of Moab put his sword into the scabbard's rest, and be still."

"Wildrake, let me entreat thee to sheathe thy sword," said Everard, "else, on my life, thou must turn it against me."

"No, 'fore George, not so mad as that neither but I'll have another day with him."

"Thou, another day!" exclaimed Harrison, whose eye had still remained fixed on the spot where he found such palpable resistance. "Yes, I know thee well; day by day, week by week, thou makest the same idle request, for thou knowest that my heart quivers at thy voice.—But my hand trembles not when opposed to thine—the spirit is willing to the combat, if the flesh be weak when opposed to that which is not of the flesh."

"Now, peace all, for Heaven's sake,"—said the steward Tomkins; then added, addressing his master, "there is no one here, if it please your Excellence, but Tomkins and the worthy Colonel Everard."

General Harrison, as sometimes happens in cases of partial insanity, (that is, supposing his to have been a case of mental delusion,) though

firmly and entirely persuaded of the truth of his own visions, yet was not willing to speak on the subject to those who, he knew, would regard them as imaginary. Upon this occasion he assumed the appearance of perfect ease and composure, after the violent agitation he had just manifested, in a manner which showed how anxious he was to disguise his real feelings from Everard, whom he considered as unlikely to participate them.

He saluted the Colonel with profound ceremony, and talked of the fineness of the evening which had summoned him forth of the Lodge, to take a turn in the Park, and enjoy the favourable weather. He then took Everard by the arm, and walked back with him towards the Lodge, Wildrake and Tomkins following close behind and leading the horses. Everard, desirous to gain some light on these mysterious incidents, endeavoured to come on the subject more than once, by a mode of interrogation, which Harrison (for madmen are very often unwilling to enter on the subject of their mental delusion) parried with some skill, or addressed himself for aid to his steward Tomkins, who was in the habit of being voucher

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for his master upon all occasions, which led to Desborough's ingenious nickname of Fibbet.

"And wherefore had you your sword drawn, my worthy General," said Everard, "when you were only on an evening walk of pleasure?"

"Truly, excellent Colonel, these are times when men must watch with their loins girded, and their lights burning, and their weapons drawn. The day draweth nigh, believe me or not as you will, that men must watch lest they be found naked and unarmed, when the seven trumpets shall sound, Boot and saddle; and the pipes of Jezer shall strike up, Horse and away."

"True, good General; but methought I saw you making passes even now as if you were fighting," said Everard.

"I am of a strange fantasy, friend Everard," answered Harrison; "and when I walk alone, and happen, as but now, to have my weapon drawn, I sometimes, for exercise' sake, will practise a thrust against such a tree as that. It is a silly pride men have in the use of weapons. I have been accounted a master of fence, and have fought prizes when I was unregenerated, and

before I was called to do my part in the great work, entering as a trooper into our victorious General's first regiment of horse."

"But methought," said Everard, "I heard a weapon clash with yours?"

"How? a weapon clash with my sword?—How could that be, Tomkins?"

"Truly, sir," said Tomkins, "it must have been a bough of the tree; they have them of all kinds here, and your honour may have pushed against one of them, which the Brazilians call iron-wood, a block of which being struck with a hammer, saith Purchas in his Pilgrimage, ringeth like an anvil."

"Truly, it may be so," said Harrison; "for these rulers who are gone, assembled in this their abode of pleasure many strange trees and plants, though they gathered not of the fruit of that tree, which beareth twelve manner of fruits, or of those leaves which are the healing of the nations."

Everard pursued his investigation; for he was struck with the manner in which Harrison evaded his questions, and the dexterity with which

he threw his transcendental and fanatical notions, like a sort of veil, over the darker visions excited by remorse and conscious guilt.

"But," said he, "if I may trust my eyes and ears, I cannot but still think that you had a real antagonist—Nay, I am sure I saw a fellow, in a dark-coloured jerkin, retreat through the wood."

"Did you?" said Harrison, with a tone of surprise, while his voice faltered in spite of him, "Who could he be?—Tomkins, did you see the fellow Colonel Everard talks of with the napkin in his hand—the bloody napkin which he always pressed to his side?"

This last expression, in which Harrison gave a mark different from that which Everard had assigned, but corresponding to Tomkins's original description of the supposed spectre, had more effect on Everard in confirming the steward's story, than anything he had witnessed or heard. The voucher answered the draft upon him as promptly as usual, that he had seen such a fellow glide past them into the thicket—that he daresay he was some deer-stealer, for he had heard they were become very audacious.

"Look ye there now, Master Everard," said Harrison, hurrying from the subject—"Is it not time now that we should lay aside our controversies, and join hand in hand to repairing the breaches of our Zion? Happy and contented were I, my excellent friend, to be a treader of mortar, or a bearer of a hod, upon this occasion, under our great leader, with whom Providence has gone forth in this great national controversy; and truly, so devoutly do I hold by our excellent and victorious General Oliver, whom Heaven long preserve—that were he to command me, I should not scruple to pluck forth of his high place the man whom they call Speaker, even as I lent a poor hand to pluck down the man whom they called King.—Wherefore, as I know your judgment holdeth with mine on this matter, let me urge unto you lovingly, that we may act as brethren, and build up the breaches, and re-establish the bulwarks of our English Zion, whereby we shall be doubtless chosen as pillars and buttresses, under our excellent Lord General, for supporting and sustaining the same, and endowed with proper revenues and incomes, both spiritual and

temporal, to serve as a pedestal, on which we may stand, seeing that otherwise our foundation will be on the loose sand.—Nevertheless," continued he, his mind again diverging from his views of temporal ambition into his visions of the Fifth Monarchy, " these things are but vanity in respect of the opening of the book which is sealed; for all things approach speedily towards lightning and thundering, and unloosing of the great dragon from the bottomless pit, wherein he is chained."

With this mingled strain of earthly politics, and fanatical prediction, Harrison so overpowered Colonel Everard, as to leave him no time to urge him further on the particular circumstances of his nocturnal skirmish, concerning which it is plain he had no desire to be interrogated. They now reached the Lodge of Woodstock.

CHAPTER III.

> Now the wasted brands do glow,
>   While the screech-owl, sounding loud,
> Puts the wretch that lies in woe,
>   In remembrance of a shroud.
> Now it is the time of night
>   That, the graves all gaping wide,
> Every one lets out its sprite,
>   In the church-way paths to glide.
>
> *Midsummer Night's Dream.*

Before the gate of the palace the guards were now doubled. Everard demanded the reason of this from the corporal, whom he found in the hall with his soldiers, sitting or sleeping around a great fire, maintained at the expense of the carved chairs and benches with fragments of which it was furnished.

"Why, verily," answered the man, "the corps de garde, as your worship says, will be harassed to pieces by such duty; nevertheless, fear hath

gone abroad among us, and no one man will mount guard alone. We have drawn in, however, one or two of our outposts from Banbury and elsewhere, and we are to have a relief from Oxford to-morrow."

Everard continued minute inquiries concerning the sentinels that were posted within as well as without the Castle; and found that, as they had been stationed under the eye of Harrison himself, the rules of prudent discipline had been exactly observed in the distribution of the posts. There remained nothing therefore for Colonel Everard to do, excepting that, remembering his own adventure of the evening, to recommend that an additional sentinel should be placed, with a companion, if judged indispensable, in that vestibule, or anti-room, from which the long gallery where he had met with the rencounter, and other suites of apartments, diverged. The corporal respectfully promised all obedience to his orders. The serving-men being called, appeared also in double force. Everard demanded to know whether the Commissioners had gone to bed, or whether he could get speech with them?

"They are in their bed-room, forsooth," replied

one of the fellows; "but I think be not yet undressed."

"What!" said Everard, "are Colonel Desborough and Master Bletson both in the same sleeping apartment?"

"Their honours have so chosen it," said the man; "and their honours' secretaries remain upon guard all night."

"It is the fashion to double guards all over the house," said Wildrake. "Had I a glimpse of a good-looking house-maid now, I should know how to fall into the fashion."

"Peace, fool!" said Everard.—"And where are the Mayor and Master Holdenough?"

"The Mayor is returned to the borough on horseback, behind the trooper, who goes to Oxford for the reinforcement; and the man of the steeple-house hath quartered himself in the chamber which Colonel Desborough had last night, being that in which he is most likely to meet the —— your honour understands. The Lord pity us, we are a harassed family!"

"And where be General Harrison's knaves," said Tomkins, "that they do not marshal him to his apartment?"

"Here—here—here, Master Tomkins," said three fellows, pressing forward, with the same consternation on their faces which seemed to pervade the whole inhabitants of Woodstock.

"Away with you then," said Tomkins;—"speak not to his worship—you see he is not in the humour."

"Indeed," observed Colonel Everard, "he looks singularly wan—his features seem writhen as by a palsy stroke; and though he was talking so fast while we came along, he hath not opened his mouth since we came to the light."

"It is his manner after such visitations," said Tomkins.—"Give his honour your arms, Zedekiah and Jonathan, to lead him off—I will follow instantly.—You, Nicodemus, tarry to wait upon me—it is not well walking alone in this mansion."

"Master Tomkins," said Everard, "I have heard of you often as a sharp, intelligent man—tell me fairly, are you in earnest afraid of anything supernatural haunting this house?"

"I would be loath to run the chance, sir," said Tomkins very gravely; "by looking on my worshipful master, you may form a guess how the living look after they have spoken with the dead."

He bowed low, and took his leave. Everard proceeded to the chamber which the two remaining Commissioners had, for comfort's sake, chosen to inhabit in company. They were preparing for bed as he went into their apartment. Both started as the door opened—both rejoiced when they saw it was only Everard who entered.

"Hark ye hither," said Bletson, pulling him aside, "sawest thou ever ass equal to Desborough?—the fellow is as big as an ox, and as timorous as a sheep. He has insisted on my sleeping here to protect him. Shall we have a merry night on't, ha? We will, if thou wilt take the third bed, which was prepared for Harrison; but he is gone out, like a mooncalf, to look for the valley of Armageddon in the Park of Woodstock."

"General Harrison has returned with me but now," said Everard.

"Nay but, as I shall live, he comes not into our apartment," said Desborough, overhearing his answer. "No man that has been supping, for aught I know, with the Devil, has a right to sleep among Christian folks."

"He does not propose so," said Everard; "he sleeps, as I understand, apart—and alone."

"Not quite alone, I dare say," said Desborough; "for Harrison hath a sort of attraction for goblins—they fly round him like moths about a candle: But, I prithee, good Everard, do thou stay with us. I know not how it is, but although thou hast not thy religion always in thy mouth, nor speakest many hard words about it, like Harrison—nor makest long preachments, like a certain most honourable relation of mine who shall be nameless, yet somehow I feel myself safer in thy company than with any of them. As for this Bletson, he is such a mere blasphemer, that I fear the Devil will carry him away ere morning."

"Did you ever hear such a paltry coward?" said Bletson, apart to Everard. "Do tarry, however, mine honoured Colonel—I know your zeal to assist the distressed, and you see Desborough is in that predicament, that he will require near him more than one good example to prevent him thinking of ghosts and fiends."

"I am sorry I cannot oblige you, gentlemen," said Everard; "but I have settled my mind to

sleep in Victor Lee's apartment, so I wish you good night; and, if you would repose without disturbance, I would advise that you commend yourselves, during the watches of the night, to Him unto whom night is even as mid-day. I had intended to have spoke with you this evening on the subject of my being here; but I will defer the conference till to-morrow, when, I think, I will be able to show you excellent reasons for leaving Woodstock."

"We have seen plenty such already," said Desborough; "for one, I came here to serve the estate, with some moderate advantage doubtless to myself for my trouble: but if I am set upon my head again to-night, as I was the night before, I would not stay longer to gain a king's crown, for I am sure my neck would be unfitted to bear the weight of it."

"Good night," exclaimed Everard; and was about to go, when Bletson again pressed close, and whispered to him, "Hark thee, Colonel—you know my friendship for thee—I do implore thee to leave the door of thy apartment open, that if thou meetest with any disturbance, I may hear thee call, and be with thee upon the very instant.

Do this, dear Everard, my fears for thee will keep me awake else; for I know that, notwithstanding your excellent sense, you entertain some of those superstitious ideas which we suck in with our mother's milk, and which constitute the ground of our fears in situations like the present; therefore leave thy door open, if you love me, that you may have ready assistance from me in case of need."

"My master," said Wildrake, "trusts, first, in his Bible, sir, and then in his good sword. He has no idea that the Devil can be baffled by the charm of two men lying in one room, still less that the foul fiend can be argued out of existence by the Nullifidians of the Rota."

Everard seized his imprudent friend by the collar, and dragged him off as he was speaking, keeping fast hold of him till they were both in the chamber of Victor Lee, where they had slept on a former occasion. Even then he continued to hold Wildrake, until the servant had arranged the lights, and was dismissed from the room; then letting him go, addressed him with the upbraiding question, "Art thou not a prudent and

sagacious person, who in times like these seek every opportunity to argue yourself into a broil, or embroil yourself in an argument? Out on you!"

"Ay, out on me, indeed," said the cavalier; "out on me for a poor tame-spirited creature, that submits to be bandied about in this manner, by a man who is neither better born nor better bred than myself. I tell thee, Mark, you make an unfair use of your advantages over me. Why will you not let me go from you, and live and die after my own fashion?"

"Because, before we had been a week separate, I should hear of your dying after the fashion of a dog. Come, my good friend, what madness was it in thee to fall foul on Harrison, and then to enter into useless argument with Bletson?"

"Why, we are in the Devil's house, I think, and I would willingly give the landlord his due wherever I travel. To have sent him Harrison, or Bletson now, just as a lunch to stop his appetite, till Crom——"

"Hush! stone walls have ears," said Everard,

looking around him. "Here stands thy night-drink. Look to thy arms, for we must be as careful as if the Avenger of Blood were behind us. Yonder is thy bed—and I, as thou seest, have one prepared in the parlour. The door only divides us."

"Which I will leave open, in case thou should'st hollo for assistance, as yonder Nullifidian hath it.—But how hast thou got all this so well put in order, good patron?"

"I gave the steward Tomkins notice of my purpose to sleep here."

"A strange fellow that," said Wildrake, "and, as I judge, has taken measure of every one's foot—all seems to pass through his hands."

"He is, I have understood," replied Everard, "one of the men formed by the times—has a ready gift of preaching and expounding, which keeps him in high terms with the Independents; and recommends himself to the more moderate people by his intelligence and activity."

"Has his sincerity ever been doubted?" said Wildrake.

"Never, that I heard of," said the Colonel;

"on the contrary, he has been familiarly called Honest Joe, and Trusty Tomkins. For my part, I believe his sincerity has always kept pace with his interest.—But come, finish thy cup, and to bed.—What, all emptied at one draught!"

"Adszookers, yes—my vow forbids me to make two on't; but, never fear—the nightcap will only warm my brain, not clog it. So, man or devil, give me notice if you are disturbed, and rely on me in a twinkling." So saying, the cavalier retreated into his separate apartment, and Colonel Everard, taking off the most cumbrous part of his dress, lay down in his hose and doublet, and composed himself to rest.

He was awakened from sleep by a slow and solemn strain of music, which died away as at a distance. He started up, and felt for his arms, which he found close beside him. His temporary bed being without curtains, he could look around him without difficulty; but as there remained in the chimney only a few red embers of the fire, which he had arranged before he went to sleep, it was impossible he could discern anything. He felt, therefore, in spite of his natural courage, that undefined and thrilling species of

tremor which attends a sense that danger is near, and an uncertainty concerning its cause and character. Reluctant as he was to yield belief to supernatural occurrences, we have already said he was not absolutely incredulous; as perhaps, even in this more sceptical age, there are many fewer complete and absolute infidels on this particular than give themselves out for such. Uncertain whether he had not dreamed of these sounds which seemed yet in his ears, he was unwilling to risk the raillery of his friend by summoning him to his assistance. He sat up, therefore, in his bed, not without experiencing that nervous agitation to which brave men as well as cowards are subject; with this difference, that the one sinks under it, like the vine under the hail-storm, and the other collects his energies to shake it off, as the cedar of Lebanon is said to elevate its boughs to disperse the snow which accumulates upon them.

The story of Harrison, in his own absolute despite, and notwithstanding a secret suspicion which he had of trick or connivance, returned on his mind at this dead and solitary hour. Harrison, he remembered, had described the vision

by a circumstance of its appearance different from that which his own remark had been calculated to suggest to the mind of the visionary;—that bloody napkin, always pressed to the side, was then a circumstance present either to his bodily eye, or to that of his agitated imagination. Did, then, the murdered revisit the living haunts of those who had forced them from the stage with all their sins unaccounted for? And if they did, might not the same permission authorize other visitations of a similar nature, to warn—to instruct—to punish? Rash are they, was his conclusion, and credulous, who receive as truth every tale of the kind; but no less rash may it be, to limit the power of the Creator over the works which he has made, and to suppose that, by the permission of the Author of Nature, the laws of Nature may not, in peculiar cases, and for high purposes, be temporarily suspended.

While these thoughts passed through Everard's mind, feelings unknown to him, even when he stood first on the rough and perilous edge of battle, gained ground upon him. He feared he knew not what; and where an open and discernible peril would have drawn out his courage, the

absolute uncertainty of his situation increased his sense of the danger. He felt an almost irresistible desire to spring from his bed and heap fuel on the dying embers, expecting by the blaze to see some strange sight in his chamber. He was also strongly tempted to awaken Wildrake; but shame, stronger than fear itself, checked these impulses. What! should it be thought that Markham Everard, held one of the best soldiers who had drawn a sword in this sad war—Markham Everard, who had obtained such distinguished rank in the army of the Parliament, though so young in years, was afraid of remaining by himself in a twilight-room at midnight?—It never should be said.

This was, however, no charm for his unpleasant current of thought. There rushed on his mind the various traditions of Victor Lee's chamber, which, though he had often despised them as vague, unauthenticated, and inconsistent rumours, engendered by ancient superstition, and transmitted from generation to generation by loquacious credulity, had yet something in them, which did not tend to allay the present un-

pleasant state of his nerves. Then, when he recollected the events of that very afternoon, the weapon pressed against his throat, and the strong arm which threw him backward on the floor—if the remembrance served to contradict the idea of flitting phantoms, and unreal daggers, it certainly induced him to believe, that there was in some part of this extensive mansion a party of cavaliers, or malignants, harboured, who might arise in the night, overpower the guards, and execute upon them all, but on Harrison in particular, as one of the regicide judges, that vengeance, which was so eagerly thirsted for by the attached followers of the slaughtered monarch.

He endeavoured to console himself on this subject, by the number and position of the guards, yet still was dissatisfied with himself for not having taken yet more exact precautions, and for keeping an extorted promise of silence, which might consign so many of his party to the danger of assassination. These thoughts, connected with his military duties, awakened another train of reflections. He bethought himself, that all he

could now do, was to visit the sentries, and ascertain that they were awake, alert, on the watch, and so situated, that in time of need they might be ready to support each other.—"This better befits me," he thought, "than to be here like a child, frightening myself with the old woman's legend, which I have laughed at when a boy. What if old Victor Lee was a sacrilegious man, as common report goes, and brewed ale in the font which he brought from the ancient palace of Holyrood, while church and building were in flames? And what if his eldest son was when a child scalded to death in the same vessel? How many churches have been demolished since his time? How many fonts desecrated? So many indeed, that were the vengeance of Heaven to visit such aggressions in a supernatural manner, no corner in England, no, not the most petty parish church, but would have its apparition.—Tush, these are idle fancies, unworthy, especially, to be entertained by those educated to believe that sanctity resides in the intention and the act, not in the buildings or fonts, or the form of worship."

As thus he called together the articles of his Calvinistic creed, the bell of the great clock (a token seldom silent in such narratives) tolled three, and was immediately followed by the hoarse call of the sentinels through vault and gallery, up stairs and beneath, challenging and answering each other with the usual watch-word, All's well. Their voices mingled with the deep boom of the bell, yet ceased before that was silent, and when they had died away, the tingling echo of the prolonged knell was scarcely audible. Ere yet that last distant tingling had finally subsided into silence, it seemed as if it again was awakened; and Everard could hardly judge at first whether a new echo had taken up the falling cadence, or whether some other and separate sound was disturbing anew the silence to which the deep knell had, as its voice ceased, consigned the ancient mansion and the woods around it.

But the doubt was soon cleared up. The musical tones, which had mingled with the dying echoes of the knell, seemed at first to prolong, and afterwards to survive them. A wild strain of melody, beginning at a distance, and grow-

ing louder as it advanced, seemed to pass from room to room, from cabinet to gallery, from hall to bower, through the deserted and dishonoured ruins of the ancient residence of so many sovereigns; and, as it approached, no soldier gave alarm, nor did any of the numerous guests of various degrees, who spent an unpleasant and terrified night in that ancient mansion, seem to dare to announce to each other the inexplicable cause of apprehension.

Everard's excited state of mind did not permit him to be so passive. The sounds approached so nigh, that it seemed they were performing, in the very next apartment, a solemn service for the dead, when he gave the alarm, by calling loudly to his trusty attendant and friend Wildrake, who slumbered in the next chamber with only a door betwixt them, and even that ajar.

"Wildrake—Wildrake!—Up—up! Dost thou not hear the alarm?"

There was no answer from Wildrake, though the musical sounds, which now rung through the apartment as if the performers had actually been within its precincts, would have been sufficient to

awaken a sleeping person, even without the shout of his comrade and patron.

"Alarm!—Roger Wildrake—alarm!" again called Everard, getting out of bed and grasping his weapons.—"Get a light, and cry alarm."

There was no answer. His voice died away as the sound of the music seemed also to die; and the same soft sweet voice, which still to his thinking resembled that of Alice Lee, was heard in his apartment, and, as he thought, at no distance from him.

"Your comrade will not answer," said the low soft voice. "Those only hear the alarm whose consciences feel the call."

"Again this mummery!" said Edward. "I am better armed than I was of late; and but for the sound of that voice, the speaker had bought his trifling dear."

It was singular, we may observe in passing, that the instant the distinct sounds of the human voice were heard by Everard, all idea of supernatural interference was at an end, and the charm by which he had been formerly fettered appeared to be broken; so much is the influence of imaginary

or superstitious terror dependant (so far as respects strong judgments at least) upon what is vague or ambiguous; and so readily do distinct tones, and express ideas, bring such judgments back to the current of ordinary life. The voice returned answer, as addressing his thoughts as well as his words.

"We laugh at the weapons thou thinkest should terrify us—Over the guardians of Woodstock they have no power. Fire if thou wilt, and try the effect of thy weapons. But know, it is not our purpose to harm thee—thou art of a falcon breed, and noble in thy disposition, though, unreclaimed and ill nurtured, thou hauntest with kites and carrion crows. Wing thy flight from hence on the morrow, for if thou tarriest with the bats, owls, vultures, and ravens, which have thought to nestle here, thou wilt inevitably share their fate. Away then, that these halls may be swept and garnished for reception of those who have a better right to inhabit them."

Everard answered in a raised voice.—"Once more I warn you, think not to defy me in vain. I am no child to be frightened by goblins' tales; and

no coward, armed as I am, to be alarmed at the threats of banditti. If I give you a moment's indulgence, it is for the sake of dear and misguided friends, who may be concerned with this dangerous gambol. Know, I can bring a troop of soldiers round the castle, who will search its most inward recesses for the author of this audacious frolic; and if that search should fail, it will cost but a few barrels of gunpowder to make the mansion a heap of ruins, and bury under them the authors of such an ill-judged pastime."

"You speak proudly, Sir Colonel," said another voice, similar to that harsher and stronger tone by which he had been addressed in the gallery; "try your courage in this direction."

"You should not dare me twice," said Colonel Everard, "had I a glimpse of light to take aim by."

As he spoke, a sudden gleam of light was thrown with a brilliancy which almost dazzled the speaker, showing distinctly a form somewhat resembling that of Victor Lee, as represented in his picture, holding in the one hand a lady completely veiled, and in the other his lead-

ing-staff, or truncheon. Both figures were animated, and, as it appeared, standing within six feet of him.

"Were it not for the woman," said Everard, "I would not be thus mortally dared."

"Spare not for the female form, but do your worst," replied the same voice. "I defy you."

"Repeat your defiance when I have counted thrice," said Everard, "and take the punishment of your insolence. Once—I have cocked my pistol—Twice—I never missed my aim—By all that is sacred, I fire if you do not withdraw. When I pronounce the next number, I will shoot you dead where you stand. I am yet unwilling to shed blood—I give you another chance of flight—once—twice—THRICE."

Everard aimed at the bosom, and discharged his pistol. The figure waved its arm in an attitude of scorn; and a loud laugh arose, during which the light, as gradually growing weaker, danced and glimmered upon the apparition of the aged knight, and then disappeared. Everard's life-blood ran cold to his heart—"Had he been of human mould,"

he thought, "the bullet must have pierced him —and I have neither will nor power to fight with supernatural beings."

The feeling of oppression was now so strong as to be actually sickening. He groped his way, however, to the fireside, and flung on the embers, which were yet gleaming, a handful of dry fuel. It presently blazed, and afforded him light to see the room in every direction. He looked cautiously, almost timidly, around, and half expected some horrible phantom to become visible. But he saw nothing save the old furniture, the reading-desk, and other articles, which had been left in the same state as when Sir Henry Lee departed. He felt an uncontrollable desire, mingled with much repugnance, to look at the portrait of the ancient knight, which the form he had seen so strongly resembled. He hesitated betwixt the opposing feelings, but at length snatched, with desperate resolution, the taper which he had extinguished, and relighted it, ere the blaze of the fuel had again died away. He held it up to the ancient portrait of Victor Lee, and gazed on it with eager curiosity, not unmingled with fear.

Almost the childish terrors of his earlier days returned, and he thought the severe pale eye of the ancient warrior followed his, and menaced him with its displeasure. And although he quickly argued himself out of such an absurd belief, yet the mixed feelings of his mind were expressed in words that seemed half addressed to the ancient portrait.

"Soul of my mother's ancestor," he said, "be it for weal or for woe, by designing men, or by supernatural beings, that these ancient halls are disturbed, I am resolved to leave them on the morrow."

"I rejoice to hear it, with all my soul," said a voice behind him.

He turned, saw a tall figure in white, with a sort of turban upon its head, and dropping the candle in the exertion, instantly grappled with it.

"*Thou* at least art palpable," he said.

"Palpable?" answered he whom he grasped so strongly—"'Sdeath, methinks you might know that without the risk of choking me; and if you loose me not, I'll show you that two can play at the game of wrestling."

"Roger Wildrake!" said Everard, letting the cavalier loose, and stepping back.

"Roger Wildrake? ay, truly. Did you take me for Roger Bacon, come to help you to raise the devil?—for the place smells of sulphur consumedly."

"It is the pistol I fired—Did you not hear it?"

"Why yes, it was the first thing waked me—for that night-cap which I pulled on, made me sleep like a dormouse—Pshaw, I feel my brains giddy with it yet."

"And wherefore came you not on the instant? —I never needed help more."

"I came as fast as I could," answered Wildrake; "but it was some time ere I got my senses collected, for I was dreaming of that cursed field at Naseby—and then the door of my room was shut, and hard to open, till I played the locksmith with my foot."

"How? it was open when I went to bed," said Everard.

"It was locked when I came out of bed though,"

said Wildrake, "and I marvel you heard me not when I forced it open."

"My mind was occupied otherwise," said Everard.

"Well," said Wildrake, "but what has happened?—Here am I bolt upright, and ready to fight, if this yawning fit will give me leave—Mother Redcap's mightiest is weaker than I drank last night, by a bushel to a barleycorn—I have quaffed the very elixir of malt—Ha—yaw."

"And some opiate besides, I should think," said Everard.

"Very like—very like—less than the pistol-shot would not waken me; even me, who with but an ordinary grace-cup sleep as lightly as a maiden on the first of May, when she watches for the earliest beam to go to gather dew. But what are you about to do next?"

"Nothing," answered Everard.

"Nothing?" said Wildrake, in surprise.

"I speak it," said Colonel Everard, "less for your information, than for that of others who may hear me, that I will leave the Lodge this morn-

ing, and, if it is possible, remove the Commissioners."

"Hark," said Wildrake, "do you not hear some noise, like the distant sound of the applause of a theatre? The goblins of the place rejoice in your departure."

"I shall leave Woodstock," said Everard, "to the occupation of my uncle Sir Henry Lee, and his family, if they choose to resume it; not that I am frightened into this as a concession to the series of artifices which have been played off on this occasion, but solely because such was my intention from the beginning But let me warn," (he added, raising his voice,)—"let me warn the parties concerned in this combination, that though it may pass off successfully on a fool like Desborough, a visionary like Harrison, a coward like Bletson——"

Here a voice distinctly spoke, as standing near them—"Or a wise, moderate, and resolute person, like Colonel Everard."

"By Heaven, the voice came from the picture," said Wildrake, drawing his sword; "I will pink his plaited armour for him."

"Offer no violence," said Everard, startled at the interruption, but resuming with firmness what he was saying,—"Let those engaged be aware, that however this string of artifices may be immediately successful, it must, when closely looked into, be attended with the punishment of all concerned—the total demolition of Woodstock, and the irremediable downfall of the family of Lee. Let all concerned think of this, and desist in time."

He paused, and almost expected a reply, but none came.

"It is a very odd thing," said Wildrake; "but—yaw-ha—my brain cannot compass it just now; it whirls round like a toast in a bowl of muscadine; I must sit down—hew-yaw—and discuss it at leisure—Gramercy, good elbow-chair."

So saying, he threw himself, or rather sank gradually down, on a large easy-chair, which had been often pressed by the weight of stout Sir Henry Lee, and in an instant was sound asleep. Everard was far from feeling the same inclination for slumber, yet his mind was relieved of the apprehension of any farther visitation that night: for he considered his treaty to evacuate Wood-

stock, as made known to, and accepted in all probability, by those whom the intrusion of the Commissioners had induced to take such singular measures for expelling them. His opinion, which had for a time bent towards a belief in something supernatural in the disturbances, had now returned to the more rational mode of accounting for them, by dexterous combination, for which such a mansion as Woodstock afforded so many facilities.

He heaped the hearth with fuel, lighted the candle, and examining poor Wildrake's situation, adjusted him as easily in the chair as he could, the cavalier stirring his limbs no more than an infant. His situation went far, in his patron's opinion, to infer trick and confederacy, for ghosts have no occasion to drug men's possets. He threw himself on the bed, and while he thought these strange circumstances over, a sweet and low strain of music stole through the chamber, the words "Good night—good night—good night," thrice repeated, each time in a softer and more distant tone, seeming to assure him that the goblins and he were at truce, if not at peace, and that he had no more disturbance to expect that night. He had scarcely the courage

to call out a "good night;" for, after all his conviction of the existence of a trick, it was so well performed as to bring with it a feeling of fear, just like what an audience feel during the performance of a tragic scene, which they know to be unreal, and which yet affects their passions by its near approach to nature. Sleep overtook him at last, and left him not till broad day-light on the ensuing morning.

CHAPTER IV.

And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger,
At whose approach ghosts, wandering here and there,
Troop home to church-yard——
Midsummer's Night's Dream.

With the fresh air, and the rising of morning, every feeling of the preceding night had passed away from Colonel Everard's mind, excepting wonder how the effects which he had witnessed could be produced. He examined the whole room, sounding bolt, floor, and wainscot, with his knuckles and cane, but was unable to discern any secret passages; while the door, secured by a strong cross bolt, and the lock besides, remained as firm as when he had fastened it on the preceding evening. The apparition resembling Victor Lee next called his attention. Ridiculous stories had been often cir-

culated, of this figure, or one exactly resembling it, having been met with by night among the waste apartments and corridors of the old palace; and Markham Everard had often heard such in his childhood. He was angry to recollect his own deficiency of courage, and the thrill which he felt on the preceding night, when by confederacy, doubtless, such an object was placed before his eyes.

"Surely," he said, "this fit of childish folly could not make me miss my aim—more likely that the bullet had been withdrawn clandestinely from my pistol."

He examined that which was undischarged—he found the bullet in it. He investigated the apartment opposite to the point at which he had fired, and, at five feet from the floor in a direct line, between the bedside and the place where the appearances had been seen, a pistol-ball had recently buried itself in the wainscot. He had little doubt, therefore, that he had fired in a just direction; and indeed to have arrived at the place where it was lodged, the bullet must have passed through

the appearance at which he aimed, and proceeded point blank to the wall beyond. This was mysterious, and induced him to doubt whether the art of witchcraft or conjuration had not been called in to assist the machinations of those daring conspirators, who, being themselves mortal, might, nevertheless, according to the universal creed of the times, have invoked and obtained assistance from the inhabitants of another world.

His next investigation respected the picture of Victor Lee itself. He examined it minutely as he stood on the floor before it, and compared its pale, shadowy, faintly-traced outlines, its faded colours, the stern repose of the eye, and deathlike pallidness of the countenance, with its different aspect on the preceding night, when illuminated by the artificial light which fell full upon it, while it left every other part of the room in comparative darkness. The features seemed then to have an unnatural glow, while the rising and falling of the flame in the chimney gave the head and limbs something which resembled the appearance of actual motion. Now, seen by day, it was a mere picture of the

hard and ancient school of Holbein; formerly, it seemed for the moment something more. Determined to get to the bottom of this contrivance if possible, Everard, by the assistance of a table and chair, examined the portrait still more closely, and endeavoured to ascertain the existence of any private spring, by which it might be slipt aside,—a contrivance not unfrequent in ancient buildings, which usually abounded with means of access and escape, communicated to none but the lords of the castle, or their immediate confidents. But the pannel on which Victor Lee was painted was firmly fixed in the wainscoting of the apartment, of which it made a part, and the Colonel satisfied himself that it could not have been used for the purpose which he had suspected.

He next aroused his faithful squire Wildrake, who, notwithstanding his deep share of the "blessedness of sleep," had scarce even yet got rid of the effects of the grace-cup of the preceding evening. "It was the reward," according to his own view of the matter, "of his temperance; one single draught having made him sleep more late and more sound than a matter of half-a-dozen, or

from thence to a dozen pulls, would have done, when he was guilty of the enormity of rere-suppers,* and of drinking deep after them."

"Had your temperate draught," said Everard, "been but a thought more strongly seasoned, Wildrake, thou hadst slept so sound that the last trump only could have waked thee."

"And then," answered Wildrake, "I should have waked with a headache, Mark; for I see my modest sip has not exempted me from that epilogue.—But let us go forth, and see how the night, which we have passed so strangely, has been spent by the rest of them. I suspect they are all right willing to evacuate Woodstock, unless they have either rested better than we, or at least been more lucky in lodgings."

"In that case, I will dispatch thee down to Joceline's hut, to negotiate the re-entrance of Sir

* Rere-suppers (*quasi arriere*) belonged to a species of luxury introduced in the jolly days of King James's extravagance, and continued through the subsequent reign. The supper took place at an early hour, six or seven o'clock at latest—the rere-supper was a postliminary banquet, a *hors d'œuvre*, which made its appearance at ten or eleven, and served as an apology for prolonging the entertainment till midnight.

Henry Lee and his family into their old apartments, where, my interest with the General being joined with the indifferent repute of the place itself, I think they have little chance of being disturbed either by the present, or by any new Commissioners."

"But how are they to defend themselves against the fiends, my gallant Colonel?" said Wildrake. "Methinks, had I an interest in yonder pretty girl, such as thou dost boast, I should be loath to expose her to the terrors of a residence at Woodstock, where these devils—I beg their pardon, for I suppose they hear every word we say—these merry goblins—make such gay work from twilight till morning."

"My dear Wildrake," said the Colonel, "I, as well as you, believe it possible that our speech may be overheard; but I care not, and will speak my mind plainly. I trust Sir Henry and Alice are not engaged in this silly plot; I cannot reconcile it with the pride of the one, the modesty of the other, or the good sense of both, that any motive could engage them in so strange a conjunction. But the fiends are all of your own political

persuasion, Wildrake, all true-blue cavaliers; and I am convinced, that Sir Henry and Alice Lee, though they be unconnected with them, have not the slightest cause to be apprehensive of their goblin machinations. Besides, Sir Henry and Joceline must know every corner about the place: it will be far more difficult to play off any ghostly machinery upon him than upon strangers. But let us to our toilette, and when water and brush hath done its work, we will inquire what is next to be done."

"Nay, that wretched puritan's garb of mine is hardly worth brushing," said Wildrake; "and but for this hundred weight of rusty iron, with which thou hast bedizened me, I look more like a bankrupt Quaker than anything else. But I'll make *you* as spruce as ever was a canting rogue of your party."

So saying, and humming at the same time the cavalier tune,—

> Though for a time we see Whitehall,
> With cobwebs hung around the wall,
> Yet Heaven shall make amends for all,
> When the King shall enjoy his own again.

"Thou forgettest who are without," said Colonel Everard.

"No—I remember who are within," replied his friend. "I only sing to my merry goblins, who will like me all the better for it. Tush, man, the devils are my *bonos socios*, and when I see them, I will warrant they prove such roaring boys as I knew when I served under Lumford and Goring, fellows with long nails that nothing escaped, bottomless stomachs that nothing filled,—mad for pillaging, ranting, drinking, and fighting,—sleeping rough on the trenches, and dying stubbornly in their boots. Ah! these merry days are gone. Well, it is the fashion to make a grave face on't among cavaliers, and specially the parsons that have lost their tithe-pigs; but I was fitted for the element of the time, and never did or can desire merrier days than I had during that same barbarous, bloody, and unnatural rebellion."

"Thou wert ever a wild sea-bird, Roger, even according to your name; liking the gale better than the calm, the boisterous ocean better than the smooth lake, and your rough, wild struggle against the wind, than daily food, ease, and quiet."

"Pshaw! a fig for your smooth lake, and your old woman to feed me with brewer's grains, and the poor drake obliged to come swattering whenever she whistles! Everard, I like to feel the wind rustle against my pinions,—now diving, now on the crest of the wave, now in ocean, now in sky—that is the wild drake's joy, my grave one! And in the Civil War so it went with us—down in one county, up in another, beaten to-day, victorious to-morrow—now starving in some barren leaguer—now revelling in a presbyterian's pantry—his cellars, his plate-chest, his old judicial thumb-ring, his pretty serving-wench, all at command!"

"Hush, friend," said Everard; "remember I hold that persuasion."

"More the pity, Mark, more the pity," said Wildrake; "but, as you say, it is needless talking of it. Let us e'en go and see how your Presbyterian pastor, Mr Holdenough, has fared, and whether he has proved more able to foil the foul Fiend than have you his disciple and auditor."

They left the apartment accordingly, and were overwhelmed with the various incoherent accounts of sentinels and others, all of whom had seen or

heard something extraordinary in the course of the night. It is needless to describe particularly the various rumours which each contributed to the common stock, with the greater alacrity that in such cases there seems always to be a sort of disgrace in not having seen or suffered as much as others.

The most moderate of the narrators only talked of sounds like the mewing of a cat, or the growling of a dog, especially the squeaking of a pig. They heard also as if it had been nails driven and saws used, and the clashing of fetters, and the rustling of silk gowns, and the notes of music, and in short all sorts of sounds which have nothing to do with each other. Others swore they had smelt savours of various kinds, chiefly bituminous, indicating a Satanic derivation; others did not indeed swear, but protested, to visions of men in armour, horses without heads, asses with horns, and cows with six legs, not to mention black figures, whose cloven hoofs gave plain information what realm they belonged to.

But these strongly-attested cases of nocturnal disturbances among the sentinels had been so ge-

neral, as to prevent alarm and succour on any particular point, so that those who were on duty called in vain on the *corps-de-garde*, who were trembling on their own post; and an alert enemy might have done complete execution on the whole garrison. But amid this general alerte, no violence appeared to be meant, and annoyance, not injury, seemed to have been the goblins' object, excepting in the case of one poor fellow, a trooper, who had followed Harrison in half his battles, and now was sentinel in that very vestibule upon which Everard had recommended them to mount a guard. He had presented his carabine at something which came suddenly upon him, when it was wrested out of his hands, and he himself knocked down with the butt-end of it. His broken head, and the drenched bedding of Desborough, upon whom a tub of ditch-water had been emptied during his sleep, were the only pieces of real evidence to attest the disturbances of the night.

The reports from Harrison's apartment were, as delivered by the grave Master Tomkins, that truly the General had passed the night undisturbed, though there was still upon him a deep sleep,

and a folding of the hands to slumber, from which Everard argued that the machinators had esteemed Harrison's part of the reckoning sufficiently paid off on the preceding evening.

He then proceeded to the apartment doubly garrisoned by the worshipful Desborough, and the philosophical Bletson. They were both up and dressing themselves, the former open-mouthed in his feeling of fear and suffering. Indeed, no sooner had Everard entered, than the ducked and dismayed Colonel made a dismal complaint of the way he had spent the night, and murmured not a little against his worshipful kinsman, for imposing a task upon him which inferred so much annoyance.

"Could not his Excellency, my kinsman Noll," he said, "have given his poor relative and brother-in-law a sop somewhere else, than out of this Woodstock, which seems to be the devil's own porridge-pot? I cannot sup broth with the devil; I have no long spoon—not I. Could he not have quartered me in some quiet corner, and given this haunted place to some of his preachers and prayers, who know the Bible as well as the muster-roll?

whereas I know the four hoofs of a clean-going nag, or the points of a team of oxen, better than all the books of Moses. But I will give it over, at once and for ever; hopes of earthly gain shall never make me run the risk of being carried away bodily by the devil, besides being set upon my head one whole night, and soused with ditch-water the next—No, no—I am too wise for that."

Master Bletson had a different part to act. He, complained of no personal annoyances; on the contrary, declared he should have slept as well as ever he did in his life, but for the abominable disturbances around him, of men calling to arms every half hour, when so much as a cat trotted by one of their posts—He would rather, he said, "have slept among a whole Sabbath of witches, if such creatures could be found."

"Then you think there are no such things as apparitions, Master Bletson?" said Everard. "I used to be sceptical on the subject; but on my life, to-night has been a strange one."

"Dreams, dreams, dreams, my simple Colonel," said Bletson, though his pale face, and shaking limbs, belied the assumed courage with which he

spoke. "Old Chaucer, sir, hath told us the real moral on't—He was an old frequenter of the forest of Woodstock, here——"

"Chaser?" said Desborough; "some huntsman belike, by his name—Does he walk, like Hearne at Windsor?"

"Chaucer," said Bletson, "my dear Desborough, is one of those wonderful fellows, as Colonel Everard knows, who live many a hundred years after they are buried, and whose words haunt our ears after their bones are long mouldered in the dust."

"Ay, ay! well—I for one desire his room rather than his company—one of your conjurers, I warrant him. But what says he to the matter?"

"Only a slight spell, which I will take the freedom to repeat to Colonel Everard," said Bletson; "but which would be as bad as Greek to thee, Desborough.—Old Geoffrey lays the whole blame of our nocturnal disturbance on superfluity of humours,

'Which causen folke to dred in their dreams
Of arrowes, and of fire with red gleams,
Right as the humour of Melancholy
Causeth many a man in sleep to cry
For fear of great bulls and bears black,
And others that black devils will them take.'"

While he was thus declaiming, Everard observed a book sticking out from beneath the pillow of the bed lately occupied by the honourable member.

"Is that Chaucer?" he said, making to the volume—"I would like to look at the passage——"

"Chaucer—" said Bletson, hastening to interfere; "no—that is Lucretius, my darling Lucretius. I cannot let you see it—I have some private marks."

But by this time Everard had the book in his hand. "Lucretius!" he said; "no, Master Bletson—this is not Lucretius, but a fitter comforter in dread or in danger—Why should you be ashamed of it?—Only, Bletson, instead of resting your head, if you can but anchor your heart upon this volume, it may serve you in better stead than Lucretius or Chaucer either."

"Why, what book is it?" said Bletson, his pale cheek colouring with the shame of detection. —"Oh, the Bible," throwing it down contemptuously—"some book of my fellow Gibeon's—these Jews have been always superstitious—ever since Juvenal's time, thou knowest—

'Qualiacunque voles Judæi somnia vendunt.'

He left me the old book for a spell, I warrant you, for 'tis a well-meaning fool."

"He would scarce have left the New Testament, as well as the Old," said Everard. "Come, my dear Bletson, do not be ashamed of the wisest thing you ever did in your life, supposing you took your Bible in an hour of apprehension, with a view to profit by the contents."

Bletson's vanity was so much galled, that it overcame his constitutional cowardice. His little thin fingers quivered for eagerness, his neck and cheeks were as red as scarlet, and his articulation was as thick and vehement as—in short, as if he had been no philosopher.

"Master Everard," he said, "you are a man of the sword, sir—and, sir, you seem to suppose yourself entitled to say whatever comes into your mind with respect to civilians, sir—But I would have you remember, sir, that there are bounds beyond which human patience may be urged, sir,—and jests which no man of honour will endure, sir,—and therefore, I expect an apology for your present language, Colonel Everard, and this un-

mannerly jesting, sir—or you may chance to hear from me in a way that will not please you."

Everard could not help smiling at this explosion of valour, engendered by irritated self-love.

"Look you, Master Bletson," he said, "I have been a soldier, that is true, but I was never a bloody-minded one; and as a Christian, I am unwilling to enlarge the kingdom of darkness by sending a new vassal thither before his time. If Heaven gives you time to repent, I see no reason why my hand should deprive you of it, which, were we to have a rencounter, would be your fate in the thrust of a sword, or the pulling of a trigger—I therefore prefer to apologize; and I call Desborough, if he has recovered his wits, to bear evidence that I *do* apologize for having suspected you, who are completely the slave of your own vanity, of any tendency, however slight, towards grace or good sense. And I farther apologize for the time that I have wasted in endeavouring to wash an Ethiopian white, or in recommending rational inquiry to a self-willed atheist."

Bletson, overjoyed at the turn the matter had

taken—for the defiance was scarce out of his mouth ere he began to tremble for the consequences—answered with great eagerness and servility of manner,—"Nay, dearest Colonel, say no more of it—an apology is all that is necessary among men of honour—it neither leaves dishonour with him who asks it, nor infers degradation on him who makes it."

"Not such an apology as I have made, I trust," said the Colonel.

"No, no—not in the least—one apology serves me just as well as another, and Desborough will bear witness you have made one, and that is all there can be said on the subject."

"Master Desborough and you will take care how the matter is reported, I dare say, and I only recommend to both, that, if mentioned at all, it may be told correctly."

"Nay, nay, we will not mention it at all," said Bletson, "we will forget it from this moment. Only, never suppose me capable of superstitious weakness. Had I been afraid of an apparent and real danger—why such fear is natural to man—and I will not deny that the mood of mind

may have happened to me as well as to others. But to be thought capable of resorting to spells, and sleeping with books under my pillow to secure myself against ghosts, on my word, it was enough to provoke one to quarrel, for the moment, with his very best friend.—And now, Colonel, what is to be done, and how is our duty to be executed at this accursed place? If I should get such a wetting as Desborough's, why I should die of catarrh, though you see it hurts him no more than a bucket of water thrown over a post-horse. You are, I presume, a brother in our commission, how are you of opinion we should proceed?"

"Why, in good time here comes Harrison," said Everard, "and I will lay my commission from the Lord General before you all; which, as you see, Colonel Desborough, commands you to desist from acting on your present authority, and intimates his pleasure accordingly, that you withdraw from this place."

Desborough took the paper and examined the signature.—"It is Noll's signature sure enough—" said he, dropping his under jaw; "only, every time of late he has made the *Oliver* as large as

a giant, while the *Cromwell* creeps after like a dwarf, as if the surname were like to disappear one of these days altogether. But is his Excellency, our kinsman, Noll Cromwell (since he has the surname yet), so unreasonable as to think his relations and friends are to be set upon their heads till they have the crick in their neck—drenched as if they had been plunged in a horse-pond—frightened, day and night, by all sort of devils, witches, and fairies, and get not a penny of smart money? Adzooks, (forgive me for swearing,) if that's the case I had better home to my farm, and mind team and herd, than dangle after such a thankless person, though I *have* wived his sister. She was poor enough when I took her, for as high as Noll holds his head now."

"It is not my purpose," said Bletson, "to stir debate in this honourable meeting; and no one will doubt the veneration and attachment which I bear to our noble General, whom the current of events, and his own matchless qualities of courage and constancy, have raised so high in these deplorable days.—If I were to term him a direct and immediate emanation of the *Animus Mundi* itself—

something which Nature had produced in her proudest hour, while exerting herself, as is her law, for the preservation of the creatures to whom she has given existence—I should scarce exhaust the ideas which I entertain of him. Always protesting, that I am by no means to be held as admitting, but merely as granting for the sake of argument, the possible existence of that species of emanation, or exhalation, from the *Animus Mundi*, of which I have made mention. I appeal to you, Colonel Desborough, who are his Excellency's relation—to you, Colonel Everard, who hold the dearer title of his friend, whether I have over-rated my zeal in his behalf."

Everard bowed at this pause, but Desborough gave a more complete authentication. "Nay, I can bear witness to that. I have seen when you were willing to tie his points or brush his cloak, or the like—and to be treated thus ungratefully—and gudgeoned of the opportunities which had been given you——"

"It is not for that," said Bletson, waving his hand gracefully. "You do me wrong, Master Desborough—you do indeed, kind sir—although

I know you meant it not—No, sir—no partial consideration of private interest prevailed on me to undertake this charge. It was conferred on me by the Parliament of England, in whose name this war commenced, and by the Council of State, who are the conservators of England's liberty. And the chance and serene hope of serving the country, the confidence that I—and you, Master Desborough—and you, worthy General Harrison—superior, as I am, to all selfish considerations—to which I am sure you also, good Colonel Everard, would be superior, had you been named in this Commission, as I would to Heaven you had—I say, the hope of serving the country, with the aid of such respectable associates, one and all of them—as well as you, Colonel Everard, supposing you to have been of the number, induced me to accept of this opportunity, whereby I might, gratuitously, with your assistance, render so much advantage to our dear mother the Commonwealth of England.—Such was my hope—my trust—my confidence. And now comes my Lord General's warrant to dissolve the authority by which we are entitled to act. Gentlemen, I

ask this honourable meeting, (with all respect to his Excellency,) whether his Commission be paramount to that from which he himself directly holds *his* commission? No one will say so. I ask whether he has climbed into the seat from which the late Man descended, or hath a great seal, or means to proceed by prerogative in such a case? I cannot see reason to believe it, and therefore I must resist such doctrine. I am in your judgment, my brave and honourable colleagues; but, touching my own poor opinion, I feel myself under the unhappy necessity of proceeding in our commission, as if the interruption had not taken place; with this addition, that the Board of Sequestrators should sit, by day, at this same Lodge of Woodstock, but that, to reconcile the minds of weak brethren, who may be afflicted by superstitious rumours, as well as to avoid any practice on our persons by the malignants, who, I am convinced, are busy in this neighbourhood, we should remove our sittings after sunset to the George Inn, in the neighbouring borough."

"Good Master Bletson," replied Colonel Everard, "it is not for me to reply to you; but you

may know in what characters this army of England and their General write their authority. I fear me the annotation on this precept of the General, will be expressed by the march of a troop of horse from Oxford to see it executed. I believe there are orders out for that effect; and you know by late experience, that the soldier will obey his General equally against King and Parliament."

"That obedience is conditional," said Harrison, starting fiercely up. "Know'st thou not, Markham Everard, that I have followed the man Cromwell as close as the bull-dog follows his master?—and so I will yet;—but I am no spaniel, either to be beaten, or to have the food I have earned snatched from me, as if I were a vile cur, whose wages are a whipping, and free leave to wear my own skin. I looked, amongst the three of us, that we might honestly, and piously, and with advantage to the Commonwealth, have gained out of this commission three, or it may be five thousand pounds. And does Cromwell imagine I will part with it for a rough word? No man goeth a warfare on his own charges. He that serves the altar must live by the altar—and the saints must have means to

provide them with good harness and fresh horses against the unsealing and the pouring forth. Does Cromwell think I am so much of a tame tiger as to permit him to rend from me at pleasure the miserable dole he hath thrown me? Of a surety I will resist; and the men who are here, being chiefly of my own regiment—men who wait, and who expect, with lamps burning and loins girded, and each one his weapon bound upon his thigh, will aid me to make this house good against every assault—ay, even against Cromwell himself, until the latter coming—Selah! Selah!——"

"And I," said Desborough, "will levy troops and protect your out-quarters, not choosing at present to close myself up in garrison——"

"And I," said Bletson, "will do my part, and hie me to town and lay the matter before Parliament, arising in my place for that effect."

Everard was little moved by all these threats. The only formidable one, indeed, was that of Harrison, whose enthusiasm, joined with his courage, and obstinacy, and character among the fanatics of his own principles, made him a dangerous enemy. Before trying any arguments with the refrac-

tory Major-General, Everard endeavoured to moderate his feelings, and threw something in about the late disturbances.

"Talk not to me of supernatural disturbances, young man—talk not to me of enemies in the body or out of the body. Am I not the champion chosen and commissioned to encounter and to conquer the great Dragon, and the Beast which cometh out of the sea? Am I not to command the left wing, and two regiments of the centre, when the Saints shall encounter with the countless legions of Gog and Magog? I tell thee that my name is written on the sea of glass mingled with fire, and that I will keep this place of Woodstock against all mortal men, and against all devils, whether in field or chamber, in the forest or in the meadow, even till the Saints reign in the fullness of their glory."

Everard saw it was then time to produce two or three lines under Cromwell's hand, which he had received from the General, subsequently to the communication through Wildrake. The information they contained was calculated to allay the disappointment of the Commissioners. This

document assigned as the reason of superseding the Woodstock Commission, that he should probably propose to the Parliament to require the assistance of General Harrison, Colonel Desborough, and Master Bletson, the honourable member for Littlefaith, in a much greater matter, namely, the disposing of the royal property, and disparking of the King's forest at Windsor. So soon as this idea was started all parties pricked up their ears, and their drooping, and gloomy, and vindictive looks began to give place to courteous smiles, and to a cheerfulness, which laughed in their eyes, and turned their moustaches upwards.

Colonel Desborough acquitted his right honourable and excellent cousin and kinsman of all species of unkindness; Master Bletson discovered, that the interest of the state was trebly concerned in the good administration of Windsor, more than in that of Woodstock. As for Harrison, he exclaimed, without disguise or hesitation, that the gleaning of the grapes of Windsor was better than the vintage of Woodstock. Thus speaking, the glance of his dark eye expressed as much triumph in the proposed earthly advantage, as if it had not been according to his vain persua-

sion, to be shortly exchanged for his share in the general reign of the Millenium. His delight, in short, resembled the joy of an eagle, who preys upon a lamb in the evening with not the less relish, because she descries an hundred thousand men about to join battle with day-break, and to give her an endless feast on the hearts and life-blood of the valiant.

Yet though all agreed that they would be obedient to the General's pleasure in this matter, Bletson proposed, as a precautionary measure, in which all agreed, that they should take up their abode for some time in the town of Woodstock, to wait for their new commissions respecting Windsor; and this upon the prudential consideration, that it was best not to slip one knot until another was first tied.

Each commissioner, therefore, wrote to Oliver individually, stating, in his own way, the depth and height, length and breadth, of his attachment to him. Each expressed himself resolved to obey the General's injunctions to the uttermost; but with the same scrupulous devotion to the Parliament, each found himself at a loss how to lay down the commission intrusted to them by that body,

and therefore felt bound in conscience to take up his residence at the borough of Woodstock, that he might not seem to abandon the charge committed to them, until they should be called to administrate the weightier matter of Windsor, to which they expressed their willingness instantly to devote themselves, according to his Excellency's pleasure.

This was the general style of their letters, varied by the characteristic flourishes of the writers. Desborough, for example, said something about the religious duty of providing for one's own household, only he blundered the text. Bletson wrote long and big words about the political obligation incumbent on every member of the community, on every person, to sacrifice his time and talents to the service of his country; while Harrison talked of the littleness of present affairs, in comparison of the approaching tremendous change of all things beneath the sun. But although the garnishing of the various epistles was different, the result came to the same, that they were determined at least to keep sight of Woodstock until they were well assured of some better and more profitable commission.

Everard also wrote a letter in the most grateful

terms to Cromwell, which would probably have been less warm had he known more distinctly than his follower chose to tell him, the expectation under which the wily General had granted his request. He acquainted his Excellency with his purpose of continuing at Woodstock, partly to assure himself of the motions of the three Commissioners, and to watch whether they did not again enter upon execution of the trust, which they had for the present renounced,—and partly to see that some extraordinary circumstances, which had taken place in the Lodge, and which would doubtless transpire, were not followed by any explosion to the disturbance of the public peace. He knew (as he expressed himself) that his Excellency was so much the friend of order, that he would rather disturbances or insurrections were prevented than punished; and he conjured the General to repose confidence in his exertions for the public service by every mode within his power; not aware, it will be observed, in what sense his general pledge might be interpreted.

These letters being made up into a packet, were forwarded to Windsor by a trooper, detached on that errand.

CHAPTER V.

We do that in our zeal,
Our calmer moments are afraid to answer.
Anonymous.

WHILE the Commissioners were preparing to remove themselves from the Lodge to the inn at the borough of Woodstock, with all that state and bustle which attend the movements of great persons, and especially of such to whom greatness is not entirely familiar, Everard held some colloquy with the Presbyterian clergyman, Master Holdenough, who had issued from the apartment which he had occupied, as it were in defiance of the spirits by whom the mansion was supposed to be disturbed, and whose pale cheek, and pensive brow, gave token that he had not passed the night more comfortably than the other inmates of the Lodge of Woodstock. Colonel

Everard having offered to procure the reverend gentleman some refreshment, received this reply:—"This day shall I not taste food, saving that which we are assured of as sufficient for our sustenance, where it is promised that our bread shall be given us and our water shall be sure. Not that I fast, in the papistical opinion that it adds to those merits, which are but an accumulation of filthy rags; but because I hold it needful that no grosser sustenance should this day cloud my understanding, or render less pure and vivid the thanks I owe to Heaven for a most wonderful preservation."

"Master Holdenough," said Everard, "you are, I know, both a good man and a bold one, and I saw you last night courageously go upon your sacred duty, when soldiers, and tried ones, seemed considerably alarmed."

"Too courageous—too venturous," was Master Holdenough's reply, the boldness of whose aspect seemed completely to have died away. "We are frail creatures, Master Everard, and frailest then when we think ourselves strongest. Oh, Colonel Everard," he added, after a pause,

and as if the confidence was partly involuntary, "I have seen that which I shall never survive!"

"You surprise me, reverend sir," said Everard;—"may I request you will speak more plainly? I have heard some stories of this wild night, nay, have witnessed strange things myself; but, methinks, I would be much interested in knowing the nature of your disturbance."

"Sir," said the clergyman, "you are a discreet gentleman; and though I would not willingly that these heretics, schismatics, Brownists, Muggletonians, Anabaptists, and so forth, had such an opportunity of triumph, as my defeat in this matter would have afforded them, yet with you, who have been ever a faithful follower of our church, and are pledged to the good cause by the great National League and Covenant, surely I would be more open. Sit we down, therefore, and let me call for a glass of pure water, for as yet I feel some bodily faltering; though, I thank Heaven, I am in mind resolute and composed as a merely mortal man may after such a vision.—They say, worthy Colonel, that looking on such things foretells, or causes, speedy death—I know not if it

be true; but if so, I only depart like the tired sentinel when his officer releases him from his post; and glad shall I be to close these wearied eyes against the sight, and shut these harassed ears against the croaking, as of frogs, of Antinomians, and Pelagians, and Socinians, and Arminians, and Arians, and Nullifidians, which have come up into our England, like those filthy reptiles into the house of Pharaoh."

Here one of the servants who had been summoned, entered with a cup of water, gazing at the same time in the face of the clergyman, as if his stupid grey eyes were endeavouring to read what tragic tale was written on his brow; and shaking his empty scull as he left the room, with the air of one who was proud of having discovered that all was not exactly right, though he could not so well guess what it was that was wrong.

Colonel Everard invited the good man to take some refreshment more genial than the pure element, but he declined: "I am in some sort a champion," he said; "and though I have been foiled in the late controversy with the Enemy, still I have my trumpet to give the alarm, and my sharp sword to smite withal; therefore, like the

Nazarites of old, I will eat nothing that cometh of the vine, neither drink wine nor strong drink, until these my days of combat shall have passed away."

Kindly and respectfully the Colonel anew pressed Master Holdenough to communicate the events that had befallen him on the preceding night; and the good clergyman proceeded as follows, with that little characteristical touch of vanity in his narrative, which naturally arose out of the part he had played in the world, and the influence which he had exercised over the minds of others. "I was a young man at the University of Cambridge," he said, "when I was particularly bound in friendship to a fellow-student, perhaps because we were esteemed (though it is vain to mention it) the most hopeful scholars at our college; and so equally advanced, that it was difficult, perhaps, to say which was the greater proficient in his studies. Only our tutor, Master Purefoy, used to say, that if my comrade had the advantage of me in gifts, I had the better of him in grace; for he was attached to the profane learning of the classics, always unprofitable, often impious and im-

pure; and I had light enough to turn my studies unto the sacred tongues. Also we differed in our opinions touching the Church of England, for he held Arminian opinions, with Laud, and those who would connect our ecclesiastical establishment with the civil, and make the Church dependent on the breath of an earthly man. In fine, he favoured Prelacy both in essentials and ceremonial; and although we parted with tears and embraces, it was to follow very different courses. He obtained a living, and became a great controversial writer in behalf of the Bishops and of the Court. I also, as is well known to you, to the best of my poor abilities, sharpened my pen in the cause of the poor oppressed people, whose tender consciences rejected the rites and ceremonies more befitting a papistical than a reformed Church, and which, according to the blinded policy of the Court, were enforced by pains and penalties. Then came the Civil War, and I—called thereunto by my conscience, and nothing fearing or suspecting what miserable consequences have chanced, through the rise of these Independents—consented to lend my coun-

tenance and labour to the great work, by becoming chaplain to Colonel Harrison's regiment. Not that I mingled with carnal weapons in the field—which Heaven defend that a minister of the altar should—but I preached, exhorted, and, in time of need, was a surgeon, as well to the wounds of the body as of the soul. Now, it fell towards the end of the war, that a party of malignants had seized on a strong house in the shire of Shrewsbury, situated on a small island, advanced into a lake, and accessible only by a small and narrow causeway. From thence they made excursions, and vexed the country; and high time it was to suppress them, so that a part of our regiment went to reduce them; and I was requested to go, for they were few in number to take in so strong a place, and the Colonel judged that my exhortations would make them do valiantly. And so, contrary to my wont, I went forth with them, even to the field, where there was valiant fighting on both sides. Nevertheless the malignants shooting their wall-pieces at us, had so much the advantage, that, after bursting their gates with a salvo of

our cannon, Colonel Harrison ordered his men to advance on the causeway, and try to carry the place by storm. Natheless, although our men did valiantly, advancing in good order, yet being galled on every side by the fire, they at length fell into disorder, and were retreating with much loss, Harrison himself valiantly bringing up the rear, and defending them as he could against the enemy, who sallied forth in pursuit of them, to smite them hip and thigh. Now, Colonel Everard, I am a man of a quick and vehement temper by nature, though better teaching than the old law hath made me mild and patient as you now see me. I could not bear to see our Israelites flying before the Philistines, so I rushed upon the causeway, with the Bible in one hand, and a halberd, which I had caught up, in the other, and turned back the foremost fugitives, by threatening to strike them down, pointing out to them at the same time a priest in his cassock, as they call it, who was among the malignants, and asking them whether they would not do as much for a true servant of Heaven, as the uncircumcised would for a priest of Baal.

My words and strokes prevailed; they turned at once, and shouting out, Down with Baal and his worshippers! they charged the malignants so unexpectedly home, that they not only drove them back into their house of garrison, but entered it with them, as the phrase is, pell mell. I also was there, partly hurried on by the crowd, partly to prevail on our enraged soldiers to give quarter; for it grieved my heart to see Christians and Englishmen hashed down with swords and gun-stocks, like curs in the street, when there is an alarm of mad-dogs. In this way, the soldiers fighting and slaughtering, and I calling to them to stay their hand, we gained the very roof of the building, which was in part leaded, and which, as to a last tower of refuge, those of the cavaliers, who yet escaped, had retired. I was myself, I may say, forced up the narrow winding staircase, by our soldiers, who rushed on like dogs of chase upon their prey; and when extricated from the passage, I found myself in the midst of a horrid scene. The scattered defenders were, some resisting with the fury of despair; some on their knees, imploring for compassion in

words and tones to break a man's heart when he thinks on them; some were calling on God for mercy; and it was time, for man had none. They were stricken down, thrust through, flung from the battlements into the lake; and the wild cries of the victors, mingled with the groans, shrieks, and clamours of the vanquished, made a sound so horrible, that only death can erase it from my memory. And the men who butchered their fellow-creatures thus, were neither Pagans from distant savage lands, nor ruffians, the refuse and off-scourings of our own people. They were in calm blood reasonable, nay, religious men, maintaining a fair repute both heavenward and earthward. Oh, Master Everard, your trade of war should be feared and avoided, since it converts such men into wolves towards their fellow-creatures!"

"It is a stern necessity," said Everard, looking down, "and as such alone is justifiable—But proceed, reverend sir; I see not how this storm, an incident but e'en too frequent on both sides during the late war, connects with the affair of last night."

"You shall hear anon," said Mr Holdenough; then paused as one who makes an effort to compose himself before continuing a relation, the tenor of which agitated him with much violence.—"In this infernal tumult," he resumed—"for surely nothing on earth could so much resemble hell, as when men go thus loose in mortal malice on their fellow-creatures,—I saw the same priest whom I had distinguished on the causeway, with one or two other malignants, pressed into a corner by the assailants, and defending themselves to the last, as those who had no hope.—I saw him—I knew him—Oh, Colonel Everard!"

He grasped Everard's hand with his own left hand, and pressed the palm of his right to his face and forehead, sobbing aloud.

"It was your college companion?" said Everard, anticipating the catastrophe.

"Mine ancient—mine only friend—with whom I had spent the happy days of youth!—I rushed forward—I struggled—I entreated. But my eagerness left me neither voice nor language—all was drowned in the wretched cry which I had my-

self raised—Down with the priest of Baal—Slay Mattan—slay him were he between the altars!—Forced over the battlements, but struggling for life, I could see him cling to one of those projections which were formed to carry the water from the leads—but they hacked at his arms and hands. —I heard the heavy fall into the bottomless abyss below.—Excuse me—I cannot go on."

"He may have escaped."

"Oh! no, no, no—the tower was four stories in height. Even those who threw themselves into the lake from the lower windows, to escape by swimming, had no safety; for mounted troopers on the shore caught the same blood-thirsty humour which had seized the storming party, galloped around the margin of the lake, and shot those who were struggling for life in the water, or cut them down as they strove to get to land. They were all cut off and destroyed.—Oh! may the blood shed on that day remain silent!—Oh! that the earth may receive it in her recesses!—Oh! that it may be mingled for ever with the dark waters of that lake, so that it may never cry for vengeance against those whose anger was fierce, and

who slaughtered in their wrath!—And, oh! may the erring man be forgiven who came into their assembly, and lent his voice to encourage their cruelty.—Oh! Albany, my brother, my brother—I have lamented for thee even as David for Jonathan!"

The good man sobbed aloud, and so much did Colonel Everard sympathize with his emotions, that he forbore to press him upon the subject of his own curiosity until the full tide of remorseful passion had for the time abated. It was, however, fierce and agitating, the more so, perhaps, that indulgence in strong mental feeling of any kind was foreign to the severe and ascetic character of the man, and was therefore the more overpowering when it had at once surmounted all restraints. Large tears flowed down the trembling features of his thin, and usually stern, or at least austere countenance; he eagerly returned the compression of Everard's hand, as if thankful for the sympathy which the caress implied.

Presently after, Master Holdenough wiped his eyes, withdrew his hand gently from that of Everard, shaking it kindly as they parted, and pro-

ceeded with more composure: "Forgive me this burst of passionate feeling, worthy Colonel.—I am conscious it little becomes a man of my cloth, who should be the bearer of consolation to others, to give way in mine own person to an extremity of grief, weak at least, if indeed it is not sinful; for what are we, that we should weep and murmur touching that which is permitted? But Albany was to me as a brother. The happiest days of my life, ere my Call to mingle myself in the strife of the land had awakened me to my duties, were spent in his company.—I—but I will make the rest of my story short."—Here he drew his chair close to that of Everard, and spoke in a solemn and mysterious tone of voice, almost lowered to a whisper—"I saw him last night."

"Saw *him*—saw whom?" said Everard. "Can you mean the person whom——"

"Whom I saw so ruthlessly slaughtered," said the clergyman.—"My ancient college-friend—Joseph Albany."

"Master Holdenough, your cloth and your character alike must prevent your jesting on such a subject as this."

"Jesting!" answered Holdenough; "I would as soon jest on my death-bed—as soon jest upon the Bible."

"But you must have been deceived," answered Everard, hastily; "this tragical story necessarily often returns to your mind, and in moments when the imagination overcomes the evidence of the outward senses, your fancy must have presented to you an unreal appearance. Nothing more likely, when the mind is on the stretch after something supernatural, than that the imagination should supply the place with a chimera, while the over-excited feelings render it difficult to dispel the delusion."

"Colonel Everard," replied Holdenough, with austerity, "in discharge of my duty I must not fear the face of man; and, therefore, I tell you plainly, as I have done before with more observance, that when you bring your carnal learning and judgment, as it is but too much your nature to do, to investigate the hidden things of another world, you might as well measure with the palm of your hand the waters of the Isis. Indeed, good sir, you err in this, and give men too much pretence to confound your honourable name with witch-

advocates, free-thinkers, and atheists, even with such as this man Bletson, who, if the discipline of the church had its hands strengthened, as it was in the beginning of the great conflict, would have been long ere now cast out of the pale, and delivered over to the punishment of the flesh, that his spirit might, if possible, be yet saved."

"You mistake, Master Holdenough," said Colonel Everard; "I do not deny the existence of such preternatural visitations, because I cannot, and dare not, raise the voice of my own opinion against the testimony of ages, supported by such learned men as yourself. Nevertheless, though I grant the possibility of such things, I have scarce yet heard of an instance in my days so well fortified by evidence, that I could at once and distinctly say, this must have happened by supernatural agency, and not otherwise."

"Hear, then, what I have to tell," said the divine, "on the faith of a man, a Christian, and what is more, a servant of our Holy Church; and therefore, though unworthy, an elder and a teacher among Christians.—I had taken my post yester evening in the half-furnished apartment,

wherein hangs a huge mirror, which might have served Goliah of Gath to have admired himself in, when clothed from head to foot in his brazen armour. I the rather chose this place, because they informed me it was the nearest habitable room to the gallery, in which they say you had been yourself assailed that evening by the Evil One.—Was it so, I pray you?"

"By some one with no good intentions I was assailed in that apartment. So far," said Colonel Everard, "you were correctly informed."

"Well, I chose my post as well as I might, even as a resolved general approaches his camp, and casts up his mound as nearly as he can to the besieged city. And, of a truth, Colonel Everard, if I felt some sensation of bodily fear,—for even Elias, and the prophets who commanded the elements, had a portion in our frail nature, much more such a poor sinful being as myself—yet was my hope and my courage high; and I thought of the texts which I might use, not in the wicked sense of periapts, or spells, as the blinded Papists employ them, together with the sign of the cross, and other fruitless forms, but as nourishing and

supporting that true trust and confidence in the blessed promises, being the true shield of faith wherewith the fiery darts of Satan may be withstood and quenched. And thus armed and prepared, I sate me down to read, at the same time to write, that I might compel my mind to attend to those subjects which became the situation in which I was placed, as preventing any unlicensed excursions of the fancy, and leaving no room for my imagination to brood over idle fears. So I methodized, and wrote down what I thought meet for the time, and peradventure some hungry souls may yet profit by the food which I then prepared."

"It was wisely and worthily done, good and reverend sir," replied Colonel Everard: "I pray you to proceed."

"While I was thus employed, sir, and had been upon the matter for about three hours, not yielding to weariness, a strange thrilling came over my senses,—and the large and old-fashioned apartment seemed to wax larger, more gloomy, and more cavernous, while the air of the night grew more cold and chill; I know not if it was that

the fire began to decay, or whether there cometh before such things as were then about to happen, a breath and atmosphere, as it were, of terror, as Job saith, in a well-known passage, 'Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made my bones to shake;' and there was a tingling noise in my ears, and a dizziness in my brain, so that I felt like those who call for aid when there is no danger, and was even prompted to flee, when I saw no one to pursue. It was then that something seemed to pass behind me, casting a reflection on the great mirror before which I had placed my writing-table, and which I saw by assistance of the great standing light which was then in front of the glass. And I looked up, and I saw in the glass distinctly the appearance of a man—as sure as these words issue from my mouth, it was no other than the same Joseph Albany—the companion of my youth—he whom I had seen precipitated down the battlements of Clidesthrough Castle into the deep lake below."

"What did you do?"

"It suddenly rushed on my mind," said the divine, "that the stoical philosopher Athenodorus

had eluded the horrors of such a vision by patiently pursuing his studies; and it shot at the same time across my mind, that I, a Christian divine, and a Steward of the Mysteries, had less reason to fear evil, and better matter on which to employ my thoughts, than was possessed by a Heathen, who was blinded even by his own wisdom. So, instead of betraying any alarm, or even turning my head around, I pursued my writing, but with a beating heart, I admit, and with a throbbing hand."

"If you could write at all," said the Colonel, "with such an impression on your mind, you may take the head of the English army for dauntless resolution."

"Our courage is not our own, Colonel," said the divine, "and not as ours should it be vaunted of. And again, when you speak of this strange vision as an impression on my fancy, and not a reality obvious to my senses, let me tell you once more, your worldly wisdom is but foolishness touching the things that are not worldly."

"Did you not look again upon the mirror?" said the Colonel.

"I did, when I had copied out the comfortable text, 'Thou shalt tread down Satan under thy feet.'"

"And what did you then see?"

"The reflection of the same Joseph Albany," said Holdenough, "passing slowly as from behind my chair, the same in member and lineament that I had known him in his youth, excepting that his cheek had the marks of the more advanced age at which he died, and was very pale."

"What did you then?"

"I turned from the glass, and plainly saw the figure which had made the reflection in the mirror retreating towards the door, not fast, nor slow, but with a gliding, steady pace. It turned again when near the door, and again showed me its pale, ghastly countenance, before it disappeared. But how it left the room, whether by the door, or otherwise, my spirits were too much hurried to remark exactly; nor have I been able, by any effort of recollection, distinctly to remember."

"This is a strange, and, as coming from you, a most excellently well-attested apparition," an-

swered Everard. "And yet, Master Holdenough, if the other world has been actually displayed, as you apprehend, and I will not dispute the possibility, assure yourself, there are also wicked men concerned in these machinations. I myself have undergone some rencontres with visitants who possessed bodily strength, and wore, I am sure, earthly weapons."

"Oh! doubtless, doubtless," replied Master Holdenough; "Beelzebub loves to charge with horse and foot mingled, as was the fashion of the old Scotch general, Davie Leslie. He has his devils in the body as well as his devils disembodied, and uses the one to support and back the other."

"It may be as you say, reverend sir," answered the Colonel.—"But what do you advise in this case?"

"For that I must consult with my brethren," said the divine; "and if there be but left in our borders five ministers of the true kirk, we will charge Satan in full body, and you shall see whether we have not power over him to resist till he

shall flee from us. But failing that ghostly armament against these strange and unearthly enemies, truly I would recommend, that as a house of witchcraft and abomination, this polluted den of ancient tyranny and prostitution should be totally consumed by fire, lest Satan, establishing his head-quarters so much to his mind, should find a garrison and a fastness from which he might sally forth to infest the whole neighbourhood. Certain it is, that I would recommend to no Christian soul to inhabit the mansion; and, if deserted, it would become a place for wizards to play their pranks, and witches to establish their Sabbath, and those who, like Demas, go about after the wealth of this world, seeking for gold and silver to practise spells and charms to the prejudice of the souls of the covetous. Trust me, therefore, it were better that it were spoiled and broken down, not leaving one stone upon another."

"I say nay to that, my good friend," said the Colonel; "for the Lord-General hath permitted, by his licence, my mother's brother, Sir Henry Lee, and his family, to return into the house of his fathers, being indeed the only roof under

which he hath any chance of obtaining shelter for his grey hairs."

"And was this done by your advice, Markham Everard?" said the divine, austerely.

"Certainly it was," returned the Colonel.—"And wherefore should I not exert mine influence to obtain a place of refuge for the brother of my mother?"

"Now, as sure as thy soul liveth," answered the presbyter, "I had believed this from no tongue but thine own. Tell me, was it not this very Sir Henry Lee, who, by the force of his buffcoats and his greenjerkins, enforced the Papist Laic's order to remove the altar to the eastern end of the church at Woodstock?—and did not he swear by his beard, that he would hang in the very street of Woodstock whoever should deny to drink the King's health?—and is not his hand red with the blood of the saints?—and hath there been a ruffler in the field for prelacy and high prerogative more unmitigable or fiercer?"

"All this may have been as you say, good Master Holdenough," answered the Colonel; "but my uncle is now old and feeble, and hath

scarce a single follower remaining, and his daughter is a being whom to look upon would make the sternest weep for pity ; a being who——"

"Who is dearer to Everard," said Holdenough, "than his good name, his faith to his friends, his duty to his religion;—this is no time to speak with sugared lips. The paths in which you tread are dangerous. You are striving to raise the papistical candlestick which Heaven in its justice removed out of its place—to bring back to this hall of sorceries those very sinners who are bewitched with them. I will not permit the land to be abused by their witchcrafts.—They shall not come hither."

He spoke this with vehemence, and striking his stick against the ground ; and the Colonel, very much dissatisfied, began to express himself haughtily in return. "You had better consider your power to accomplish your threats, Master Holdenough," he said, "before you urge them so peremptorily."

"And have I not the power to bind and to loose ?" said the clergyman.

"It is a power little available, save over those

of your own church," said Everard, with a tone something contemptuous.

"Take heed—take heed," said the divine, who, though an excellent, was, as we have elsewhere seen, an irritable man.—"Do not insult me; but think honourably of the messenger, for the sake of Him whose commission he carries.—Do not, I say, defy me—I am bound to discharge my duty, were it to the displeasing of my twin brother."

"I can see nought your office has to do in the matter," said Colonel Everard; "and I, on my side, give you warning not to attempt to meddle beyond your commission."

"Right—you hold me already to be as submissive as one of your grenadiers," replied the clergyman, his acute features trembling with a sense of indignity, so as even to agitate his grey hair; "but beware, sir, I am not so powerless as you suppose. I will invoke every true Christian in Woodstock to gird up his loins, and resist the restoration of prelacy, oppression, and malignancy within our borders. I will stir up the wrath of the righteous against the oppressor—the Ishmael-

ite—the Edomite—and against his race, and against those who support him and encourage him to rear up his horn. I will call aloud, and spare not, and arouse the many whose love hath waxed cold, and the multitude who care for none of these things. There shall be a remnant to listen to me; and I will take the stick of Joseph, which was in the hand of Ephraim, and go down to cleanse this place of witches and sorcerers, and of enchantments, and will cry and exhort, saying—Will you plead for Baal?—will you serve him? Nay, take the prophets of Baal—let not a man escape."

"Master Holdenough, Master Holdenough," said Colonel Everard, with much impatience, "by the tale yourself told me, you have exhorted upon that text once too often already."

The old man struck his palm forcibly against his forehead, and fell back into a chair as these words were uttered, as suddenly, and as much without power of resistance, as if the Colonel had fired a pistol through his head. Instantly regretting the reproach which he had suffered to escape him in his impatience, Everard hasten-

ed to apologize, and to offer every conciliatory excuse, however inconsistent, which occurred to him on the moment. But the old man was too deeply affected—he rejected his hand, lent no ear to what he said, and finally started up, saying sternly, " You have abused my confidence, sir—abused it vilely, to turn it into my own reproach: had I been a man of the sword, you dared not——But enjoy your triumph, sir, over an old man, and your father's friend—strike at the wound his imprudent confidence showed you."

" Nay, my worthy and excellent friend," said the Colonel——

" Friend !" answered the old man, starting up —" We are foes, sir—foes now, and for ever !"

So saying, and starting from the seat into which he had rather fallen than thrown himself, he ran out of the room with a precipitation of step which he was apt to use upon occasions of irritable feeling, and which was certainly more eager than dignified, especially as he muttered while he ran, and seemed as if he were keeping up his own passion, by recounting over and over the offence which he had received.

" Soh !" said Colonel Everard, " and there

was not strife enough between mine uncle and the people of Woodstock already, but I must needs increase it, by chafing this irritable and quick-tempered old man, eager as I knew him to be in his ideas of church government, and stiff in his prejudices respecting all who dissent from him! The mob of Woodstock will rise; for though he would not get a score of them to stand by him in any honest or intelligible purpose, yet let him cry havoc and destruction, and I will warrant he has followers enow. And my uncle is equally wild and unpersuadable. For the value of all the estate he ever had, he would not allow a score of troopers to be quartered in the house for defence; and if he be alone, or has but Joceline to stand by him, he will be as sure to fire upon those who come to attack the Lodge, as if he had a hundred men in garrison; and then what can chance but danger and bloodshed?"

This progress of melancholy anticipation was interrupted by the return of Master Holdenough, who, hurrying into the room, with the same precipitate pace at which he had left it, ran straight up to the Colonel, and said—"Take my hand,

Markham—take my hand hastily; for the old Adam is whispering at my heart, that it is a disgrace to hold it extended so long."

"Most heartily do I receive your hand, my venerable friend," said Everard, "and I trust in sign of renewed amity."

"Surely, surely—" said the divine, shaking his hand kindly; "thou hast, it is true, spoken bitterly; but thou hast spoken truth in good time; and I think—though your words were severe—with a good and kindly purpose. Verily, and of a truth, it were sinful in me again to be hasty in provoking violence, remembering that which you have upbraided me with——"

"Forgive me, good Master Holdenough," said Colonel Everard, "it was a hasty word; I meant not in serious earnest to *upbraid*."

"Peace, I pray you, peace," said the divine; "I say, the allusion to that which you have *most justly* upbraided me with—though the charge aroused the gall of the Old Man within me, the inward tempter being ever on the watch to bring us to his lure—ought, instead of being resented, to have been acknowledged by me as a favour, for

so are the wounds of a friend termed faithful. And surely I, who have by one unhappy exhortation to battle and strife, sent the living to the dead—and I fear brought back even the dead among the living—should now study peace and good will, and reconciliation of difference, leaving punishment to the Great Being whose laws are broken, and vengeance to Him who hath said, I will repay it."

The old man's mortified features lighted up with a humble confidence as he made this acknowledgment; and Colonel Everard, who knew the constitutional infirmities, and the early prejudices of professional consequence and exclusive party opinion, which he must have subdued ere arriving at such a tone of candour, hastened to express his admiration of his Christian charity, mingled with reproaches on himself for having so deeply injured his feelings.

"Think not of it—think not of it, excellent young man," said Holdenough; "we have both erred—I in suffering my zeal to outrun my charity, you, perhaps, in pressing hard on an old and peevish man, who had so lately poured out

his sufferings into your friendly bosom. Be it all forgotten. Let your friends—if they are not deterred by what has happened at this manor of Woodstock—resume their habitation as soon as they will. If they can protect themselves against the powers of the air, believe me, that if I can prevent it by aught in my power, they shall have no annoyance from earthly neighbours; and assure yourself, good sir, that my voice is still worth something with the worthy Mayor, and the good Aldermen, and the better sort of house-keepers up yonder in the town, although the lower classes are blown about with every wind of doctrine. And yet farther be assured, Colonel, that should your mother's brother, or any of his family, learn that they have taken up a rash bargain in returning to this unhappy and unhallowed house, or should they find any qualms in their own hearts and consciences which require a ghostly comforter, Nehemiah Holdenough will be as much at their command by night or day, as if they had been bred up within the holy pale of the church in which he is an unworthy minister; and neither the awe of what is fearful to be seen

within these walls, nor his knowledge of their blinded and carnal state, as bred up under a prelatic dispensation, shall prevent him doing what lies in his poor abilities for their protection and edification."

"I feel all the force of your kindness, reverend sir," said Colonel Everard, "but I do not think it likely that my uncle will give you trouble on either score. He is a man much accustomed to be his own protector in temporal danger, and in spiritual doubts to trust to his own prayers and those of his Church."

"I trust I have not been superfluous in offering mine assistance," said the old man, something jealous that his proffered spiritual aid had been held rather intrusive. "I ask pardon if that is the case—I humbly ask pardon—I would not willingly be superfluous."

The Colonel hastened to appease this new alarm of the watchful jealousy of his consequence, which, joined with a natural heat of temper which he could not always subdue, were the good man's only faults.

They had regained their former friendly foot-

ing, when Roger Wildrake returned from the hut of Joceline, and whispered his master that his embassy had been successful. The Colonel then addressed the divine, and informed him, that as the Commissioners had already given up Woodstock, and as his uncle, Sir Henry Lee, proposed to return to the Lodge about noon, he would, if his reverence pleased, attend him up to the borough.

"Will you not tarry," said the reverend man, with something like inquisitive apprehension in his voice, "to welcome your relatives upon their return to this their house?"

"No, my good friend," said Colonel Everard; "the part which I have taken in these unhappy broils—perhaps also the mode of worship in which I have been educated—have so prejudiced me in mine uncle's opinion, that I must be for some time a stranger to his house and family."

"Indeed! I rejoice to hear it, with all my heart and soul," said the divine. "Excuse my frankness—I do indeed rejoice,—I had thought—no matter what I had thought,—I would not again give offence. But truly though the maiden

hath a pleasant feature, and he, as all men say, is in human things unexceptionable,—yet—but I give you pain—in sooth, I will say no more unless you ask my sincere and unprejudiced advice, which you shall command, but which I will not press on you superfluously. Wend we to the borough together—the pleasant solitude of the forest may dispose us to open our hearts to each other."

They did walk up to the little town in company, and, somewhat to Master Holdenough's surprise, the Colonel, though they talked on various subjects, did not request of him any ghostly advice on the subject of his love to his fair cousin, while, greatly beyond the expectation of the soldier, the clergyman kept his word, and, in his own phrase, was not so superfluous as to offer upon so delicate a point his unasked counsel.

CHAPTER VI.

> Then are the harpies gone—Yet ere we perch
> Where such foul birds have roosted, let us cleanse
> The foul obscenity they've left behind them.
>
> *Agamemnon.*

The embassy of Wildrake had been successful, chiefly through the mediation of the Episcopal divine, whom we formerly found acting in the character of chaplain to the family, and whose voice had great influence on many accounts with its master.

A little before high noon, Sir Henry Lee, with his small household, was again in unchallenged possession of their old apartments at the Lodge of Woodstock; and the combined exertions of Joceline Jolliffe, of Phœbe, and of old Joan, were employed in putting to rights what the late intruders had left in great disorder.

Sir Henry Lee had, like all persons of qua-

lity of that period, a love of order amounting to precision, and felt, like a fine lady whose dress has been disordered in a crowd, insulted and humiliated by the rude confusion into which his household goods had been thrown, and impatient till his mansion had been purified from all marks of intrusion. In his anger he uttered more orders than the limited number of his domestics were likely to find time or hands to execute. "The villains have left such sulphureous steams behind them, too," said the old knight, "as if old Davie Leslie and the whole Scotch army had quartered among them."

"It may be near as bad," said Joceline, "for men say, for certain, it was the Devil came down bodily among them, and made them troop off."

"Then," said the knight, "is the Prince of Darkness a gentleman, as old Will Shakspeare says. He never interferes with those of his own coat, for the Lees have been here, father and son, these five hundred years, without disquiet; and no sooner came these misbegotten churls, than he plays his own part among them."

"Well, one thing he and they have left us,"

said Jolliffe, " which we may thank them for; and that is, such a well-filled larder and buttery as has been seldom seen in Woodstock Lodge this many a day;—carcases of mutton, large rounds of beef, barrels of confectioners' ware, pipes and runlets of sack, muscadine, ale, and what not. We shall have a royal time on't through half the winter; and Joan must get to salting and pickling presently."

" Out, villain !" said the knight; " are we to feed on the fragment of such scum of the earth as these ?—Cast them forth instantly !—Nay," checking himself, " that were a sin; but give them to the poor, or see them sent to the owners.—And, hark ye, I will none of their strong liquors—I would rather drink like a hermit all my life, than seem to pledge such scoundrels as these in their leavings, like a miserable drawer, who drains off the ends of the bottles after the guests have paid their reckoning, and gone off. —And, hark ye, I will taste no water from the cistern out of which these slaves have been serving themselves—fetch me down a pitcher from Rosamond's spring."

Alice heard this injunction, and well guessing there was enough for the other members of the family to do, she quietly took a small pitcher, and flinging a cloak around her, walked out in person to procure Sir Henry the water which he desired. Meantime, Joceline said, with some hesitation, "that there was a man still remained, belonging to the party of these strangers, who was directing about the removal of some trunks and mails which belonged to the Commissioners, and who could receive his honour's commands about the provisions."

"Let him come hither."—(The dialogue was held in the hall.)—"Why do you hesitate, and drumble in that manner?"

"Only, sir," said Joceline, "only perhaps your honour might not wish to see him, being the same who, on the night before last——"

He paused.

"Sent my rapier a hawking through the firmament, thou would'st say?—Why, when did I take spleen at a man for standing his ground against me?—Roundhead as he is, man, I like him the better of that, not the worse. I hunger

and thirst to have another turn with him. I have thought on his passado ever since, and I believe, were it to try again, I know a feat would control it.—Fetch him directly."

Trusty Tomkins was presently ushered in, bearing himself with an iron gravity, which neither the terrors of the preceding night, nor the dignified demeanour of the high-born personage before whom he stood, were able for an instant to overcome.

"How now, good fellow?" said Sir Henry; "I would fain see something more of thy fence, which baffled me the other evening—but truly, I think the light was somewhat too faint for my old eyes—Take a foil, man—I walk here in the hall, as Hamlet says; and 'tis the breathing-time of day with me—Take a foil then in thy hand."

"Since it is your worship's desire," said the steward, letting fall his long cloak, and taking the foil in his hand.

"Now," said the knight, "if your fitness speaks, mine is ready. Methinks the very stepping on this same old pavement hath charmed away the gout which threatened me.—Sa—sa—I tread as firm as a game-cock."

They began the play with great spirit; and whether the old knight really fought more coolly with the blunt than with the sharp weapon, or whether the steward gave him some grains of advantage in this merely sportive encounter, it is certain Sir Henry had the better in the assault. His success put him into excellent humour.

"There," said he, "I found your trick,—nay, you cheat me not twice the same way—There was a very palpable hit—Why, had I had but light enough the other night—But it skills not speaking of it—Here we leave off; I must not fight, as we unwise cavaliers did with you round-head rascals, beating you so often that we taught you to beat us at last.—And good now, tell me why you are leaving your larder so full here?—Do you think I or my family can use broken victuals?—What, have you no better employment for your rounds of sequestrated beef than to leave them behind you when you shift your quarters?"

"So please your honour," said Tomkins, "it may be that you desire not the flesh of beeves, of rams, or of goats. Nevertheless, when you

know that the provisions were provided and paid for out of your own rents and stock at Ditchley, sequestrated to the use of the state more than a year since, it may be you will have less scruple to use them for your own behoof."

"Rest assured that I shall," said Sir Henry; "and glad you have helped me to a share of mine own. Certainly I was an ass to suspect your masters of subsisting, save at honest men's expense."

"And as for the rumps of beeves," continued Tomkins, with the same solemnity, "there is a rump at Westminster, which will stand us of the army much hacking and hewing yet, ere it is discussed to our mind."

Sir Henry paused, as if to consider what was the meaning of this inuendo; for he was not a person of very quick apprehension. But having at length caught the meaning of it, he burst into an explosion of louder laughter than Joceline had seen him indulge in for a good while.

"Right, knave," he said, "I taste thy jest—It is the very moral of the puppet-show. Faus-

tus raised the devil, as the Parliament raised the army—and then, as the devil flies away with Faustus, so will the army fly away with the Parliament—or the rump, as thou call'st it, or sitting part of the so-called Parliament.—And then, look you, friend, the very devil of all hath my willing consent to fly away with the army in its turn, from the highest general down to the lowest drum-boy.—Nay, never look fierce for the matter; remember there is daylight enough now for a game at sharps."

Trusty Tomkins appeared to think it best to suppress his displeasure; and observing, that the wains were ready to transport the Commissioners' property to the borough, took a grave leave of Sir Henry Lee.

Meantime the old man continued to pace his recovered hall, rubbing his hands, and evincing greater signs of glee than he had shown since the fatal 30th of January.

"Here we are again in the old frank, Joliffe—well victualled too.—How the knave solved my point of conscience!—the dullest of them is a special casuist where the question concerns pro-

fit. Look out if there are not some of our own ragged regiment lurking about, to whom a belly-full would be a God-send, Joceline—Then his fence, Joceline—though the fellow foins well—very sufficient well—But thou saw'st how I dealt with him when I had fitting light, Joceline."

"Ay, and so your honour did," said Joceline. "You taught him to know the Duke of Norfolk from Saunders Gardner. I'll warrant him, he will not wish to come under your honour's thumb again."

"Why, I am waxing old," said Sir Henry; "but skill will not rust through age, though sinews must stiffen. But my age is like a lusty winter, as old Will says—frosty but kindly—And what if, old as we are, we live to see better days yet! I promise thee, Joceline, I love this jarring betwixt the rogues of the board and the rogues of the sword. When thieves quarrel, true men have a chance of coming by their own."

Thus triumphed the old cavalier, in the treble glory of having recovered his dwelling, regain-ed, as he thought, his character as a man of fence, and finally discovered some prospect of a change

of times, in which he was not without hopes that something might turn up for the royal interest.

Meanwhile, Alice, with a prouder and a lighter heart than had danced in her bosom for several days, went forth with a gaiety to which she of late had been a stranger, to contribute her assistance to the regulation and supply of the household, by bringing the fresh water wanted from fair Rosamond's well.

Perhaps, she remembered, that when she was but a girl, her cousin Markham used, among others, to make her perform that duty, as presenting the character of some captive Trojan princess, condemned by her situation to draw the waters from some Grecian spring, for the use of the proud victor.—At any rate, she certainly joyed to see her father reinstated in his ancient habitation; and the joy was not the less sincere, that she knew their return to Woodstock had been procured by means of her cousin, and that even in her father's prejudiced eyes, Everard had been in some degree exculpated of the accusations the old knight had brought against him; and that if a reconciliation had not yet taken place, the

preliminaries had been established on which such a desirable conclusion might easily be founded. It was like the commencement of a bridge, when the foundation is securely laid, and the piers raised above the influence of the torrent; the throwing of the arches may be accomplished in a subsequent season.

The doubtful fate of her only brother might have clouded even this momentary gleam of sunshine; but Alice had been bred up during the close and frequent contests of civil war, and had acquired the habit of hoping in behalf of those dear to her, until hope was lost. In the present case, all reports seemed to assure her of her brother's safety.

Besides these causes for gaiety, Alice Lee had the pleasing feeling that she was restored to the habitation and the haunts of her childhood, from which she had not departed without much pain, the more felt, perhaps, because suppressed, in order to avoid irritating her father's sense of his misfortune. Finally, she enjoyed for the instant the gleam of self-satisfaction by which we see the young and well-disposed so often animated, when

they can be, in common phrase, helpful to those whom they love, and perform at the moment of need some of those little domestic tasks, which age receives with so much pleasure from the dutiful hands of youth. So that, altogether, as she hasted through the remains and vestiges of a wilderness already mentioned, and from thence about a bow-shot into the Park, to bring a pitcher of water from Rosamond's spring, Alice Lee, her features enlivened and her complexion a little raised by the exercise, had, for the moment, regained the gay and brilliant vivacity of expression which had been the characteristic of her beauty in her earlier and happier days.

This fountain of old memory had been once adorned with architectural ornaments in the style of the sixteenth century, chiefly relating to ancient mythology. All these were now wasted and overthrown, and existed only as moss-covered ruins, while the living spring continued to furnish its daily treasures, unrivalled in purity, though the quantity was small, gushing out amid disjointed stones, and bubbling through fragments of ancient sculpture.

With a light step and a laughing brow the young Lady of Lee was approaching the fountain, usually so solitary, when she paused on beholding some one seated beside it. She proceeded, however, with confidence, though with a step something less gay, when she observed that the person was a female;—some menial perhaps from the town, whom a fanciful mistress occasionally dispatched for the water of a spring, supposed to be peculiarly pure, or some aged woman, who made a little trade by carrying it to the better sort of families, and selling it for a trifle. There was no cause, therefore, for apprehension.

Yet the terrors of the times were so great, that Alice did not even see a stranger of her own sex without some apprehension. Denaturalized women had as usual followed the camps of both armies during the Civil War; who on the one side with open profligacy and profanity, on the other with the fraudful tone of fanaticism or hypocrisy, exercised nearly in like degree their talents for murder or plunder. But it was broad daylight, the distance from the Lodge was but trifling, and though a little alarmed at seeing a stranger where she expected deep solitude, the daughter of the

haughty old Knight had too much of the lion about her, to fear without some determined and decided cause.

Alice walked, therefore, gravely on toward the fount, and composed her looks as she took a hasty glance of the female who was seated there, and addressed herself to her task of filling her pitcher.

The woman, whose presence had surprised and somewhat startled Alice Lee, was a person of the lower rank, whose red cloak, russet kirtle, handkerchief trimmed with Coventry blue, and a coarse steeple hat, could not indicate at best anything higher than the wife of a small farmer, or, perhaps, the helpmate of a bailiff or hind. It was well if she proved nothing worse. Her clothes, indeed, were of good materials; but, what the female eye discerns with half a glance, they were indifferently adjusted and put on. This looked as if they did not belong to the person by whom they were worn, but were articlesof which she had become the mistress by some accident, if not by some successful robbery. Her size, too, as did not escape Alice, even in the short perusal she afforded the stranger, was unusual; her features

swarthy and singularly harsh, and her manner altogether unpropitious. The young lady almost wished, as she stooped to fill her pitcher, that she had rather turned back, and sent Joceline on the errand; but repentance was too late now, and she had only to disguise as well as she could her unpleasant feelings.

"The blessings of this bright day to one as bright as it is," said the stranger, with no unfriendly, though a harsh voice.

"I thank you," said Alice in reply; and continued to fill her pitcher busily, by assistance of an iron bowl which remained still chained to one of the stones beside the fountain.

"Perhaps, my pretty maiden, if you would accept my help, your work would be sooner done," said the stranger.

"I thank you," said Alice; "but had I needed assistance, I could have brought those with me who had rendered it."

"I do not doubt of that, my pretty maiden," answered the female; "there are too many lads in Woodstock with eyes in their heads—No doubt you could have brought with you any one of them who looked on you, if you had listed."

Alice replied not a syllable, for she did not like the freedom used by the speaker, and was desirous to break off the conversation.

"Are you offended, my pretty mistress?" said the stranger; "that was far from my purpose. —I will put my question otherwise—Are the good dames of Woodstock so careless of their pretty daughters as to let the flower of them all wander about the wild chase without a mother, or a somebody to prevent the fox from running away with the lamb?—that carelessness, methinks, shows small kindness."

"Content yourself, good woman, I am not far from protection and assistance," said Alice, who liked less and less the effrontery of her new acquaintance.

"Alas! my pretty maiden," said the stranger, patting with her large and hard hand the head which Alice had kept bended down towards the water which she was laving, "it would be difficult to hear such a pipe as yours at the town of Woodstock, scream as loud as you would."

Alice shook the woman's hand angrily off, took up her pitcher, though not above half full, and as she saw the stranger rise at the same time,

said, not without fear doubtless, but with a natural feeling of resentment and dignity, "I have no reason to make my cries heard as far as Woodstock; were there occasion for my crying for help at all, it is nearer at hand if I need it."

She spoke not without a warrant; for, at the moment, broke through the bushes, and stood by her side, the noble hound Bevis; fixing on the stranger his eyes that glanced fire, raising every hair on his gallant mane as upright as the bristles of a wild boar when hard pressed, grinning till a case of teeth, which would have matched those of any wolf in Russia, were displayed in full array, and, without either barking or springing, seeming, by his low determined growl, to await but the signal for dashing at the female, whom he plainly considered as a suspicious person.

But the stranger was undaunted. "My pretty maiden," she said, "you have indeed a formidable guardian there, where cockneys or bumpkins are concerned; but we who have been at the wars know spells for taming such furious dragons; and therefore let not your four-footed protector go loose on me, for he si a noble animal, and no-

thing but self-defence would induce me to do him injury." So saying, she drew a pistol from her bosom, and cocked it—pointing it towards the dog, as if apprehensive that he would spring upon her.

"Hold, woman, hold!" said Alice Lee; "the dog will not do you harm.—Down, Bevis, couch down—And ere you attempt to hurt him, know he is the favourite hound of Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley, the keeper of Woodstock Park, who would severely revenge any injury offered to him."

"And you, pretty one, are the old knight's housekeeper, doubtless? I have often heard the Lees have good taste."

"I am his daughter, good woman."

"His daughter!—I was blind—but yet it is true, nothing less perfect could answer the description which all the world has given of Mistress Alice Lee. I trust that my folly has given my young mistress no offence, and that she will allow me, in token of reconciliation, to fill her pitcher, and carry it as far as she will permit."

"As you will, good mother; but I am about to return instantly to the Lodge, to which, in

these times, I cannot admit strangers. You can follow me no farther than the verge of the wilderness, and I am already too long from home: I will send some one to meet and relieve you of the pitcher." So saying, she turned her back, with a feeling of terror which she could hardly account for, and began to walk quickly towards the Lodge, thinking thus to get rid of her trousome acquaintance.

But she reckoned without her host; for in a moment her new companion was by her side, not running, indeed, but walking with prodigious long unwomanly strides, which soon brought her up with the hurried and timid steps of the frightened maiden. But her manner was more respectful than formerly, though her voice sounded remarkably harsh and disagreeable, and her whole appearance suggested an undefined, yet irresistible feeling of apprehension.

"Pardon a stranger, lovely Mistress Alice," said her persecutor, "that was not capable of distinguishing between a lady of your high quality and a peasant wench, and who spoke to you with a degree of freedom, ill-befitting your rank,

certainly, and condition, and which, I fear, has given you offence."

"No offence whatever," replied Alice; "but, good woman, I am near home, and can excuse your farther company.—You are unknown to me."

"But it follows not," said the stranger, "that *your* fortunes may not be known to *me*, fair Mistress Alice. Look on my swarthy brow—England breeds none such—and in the lands from which I come, the sun which blackens our complexion, pours, to make amends, rays of knowledge into our brains, which are denied to those of your lukewarm climate. Let me look upon your pretty hand,—(attempting to possess herself of it,)—and I promise you, you shall hear what will please you."

"I hear what does *not* please me," said Alice, with dignity; "you must carry your tricks of fortune-telling and palmistry to the women of the village—We of the gentry hold them to be either imposture or unlawful knowledge."

"Yet you would fain hear of a certain Colonel, I warrant you, whom certain unhappy cir-

cumstances have separated from his family; you would give better than silver if I could assure you that you would see him in a day or two—ay, perhaps sooner."

"I know nothing of what you speak, good woman; if you want alms, there is a piece of silver—it is all I have in my purse."

"It were pity that I should take it," said the female; "and yet give it me—for the princess in the fairy tale must ever deserve, by her generosity, the bounty of the benevolent fairy before she is rewarded by her protection."

"Take it—take it—give me my pitcher," said Alice, "and begone,—yonder comes one of my father's servants.—What, ho!—Joceline—Joceline!"

The old fortune-teller hastily dropped something into the pitcher as she restored it to Alice Lee, and, plying her long limbs, disappeared speedily under cover of the wood.

Bevis turned, and backed, and showed some inclination to harass the retreat of this suspicious person, yet, as if uncertain, ran towards Joliffe, and fawned on him, to demand his advice and

encouragement. Joceline pacified the animal, and, coming up to his young lady, asked her, with surprise, what was the matter, and whether she had been frightened? Alice made light of her alarm, for which, indeed, she could not have assigned any very competent reason; for the manners of the woman, though bold and intrusive, were not menacing. She only said she had met a fortune-teller by Rosamond's Well, and had had some difficulty in shaking her off.

"Ah, the gipsy thief," said Joceline, "how well she scented there was food in the pantry!—they have noses like ravens these strollers. Look you, Mistress Alice, you shall not see a raven, or a carrion-crow, in all the blue sky for a mile round you; but let a sheep drop suddenly down on the green-sward, and before the poor creature's dead you shall see a dozen of such guests croaking, as if inviting each other to the banquet.—Just so it is with these sturdy beggars. You will see few enough of them when there's nothing to give, but when hough's in the pot, they will have share on't."

"You are so proud of your fresh supply of

provender," said Alice, "that you suspect all of a design on't. I do not think this woman will venture near your kitchen, Joceline."

"It will be best for her health," said Joceline, "lest I give her a ducking for digestion.—But give me the pitcher, Mistress Alice—meeter I bear it than you.—How now? what jingles at the bottom? have you lifted the pebbles as well as the water?"

"I think the woman dropped something into the pitcher," said Alice.

"Nay, we must look to that, for it is like to be a charm, and we have enough of the devil's ware about Woodstock already—we will not spare for the water—I can run back and fill the pitcher." He poured out the water upon the grass, and at the bottom of the pitcher was found a gold ring, in which was set a ruby, apparently of some value.

"Nay, if this be not enchantment, I know not what is," said Joceline. "Truly, Mistress Alice, I think you had better throw away this gimcrack. Such gifts from such hands are a kind of press-money which the devil uses for enlisting

his regiment of witches; and if they take but so much as a bean from him, they become his bond slaves for life—Ay, you look at the gew-gaw, but to-morrow you will find a lead ring and a common pebble in its stead."

"Nay, Joceline, I think it will be better to find out that dark-complexioned woman, and return to her what seems of some value. So, cause inquiry to be made, and be sure you return her ring. It seems too valuable to be destroyed."

"Umph! that is always the way with women," murmured Joceline. "You will never get the best of them, but she is willing to save a bit of finery.—Well, Mistress Alice, I trust that you are too young and too pretty to be enlisted in a regiment of witches."

"I shall not be afraid of it till you turn conjurer," said Alice; "so hasten to the well, where you are like still to find the woman, and let her know that Alice Lee desires none of her gifts, any more than she did of her society."

So saying, the young lady pursued her way to the Lodge, while Joceline went down to Rosamond's Well to execute her commission. But

the fortune-teller, or whoever she might be, was nowhere to be found; neither, finding that to be the case, did Joceline give himself much trouble in tracking her farther.

"If this ring, which I dare say the jade stole somewhere," said the under-keeper to himself, "be worth a few nobles, it is better in honest hands than in that of vagabonds. My master has a right to all waifs and strays, and certainly such a ring, in possession of a gipsy, must be a waif. So I shall confiscate it without scruple, and apply the produce to the support of Sir Henry's household, which is like to be poor enough. Thank Heaven, my military experience has taught me how to carry hooks at my finger-ends—that is trooper's law. Yet hang it, after all, I had best take it to Mark Everard and ask his advice—I hold him now to be your learned counsellor in law where Mistress Alice's affairs are concerned, and my learned Doctor, who shall be nameless, for such as concern Church and State and Sir Henry Lee—And I'll give them leave to give mine umbles to the kites and ravens if they find me conferring my confidence where it is not safe."

CHAPTER VII.

Being skilless in these parts, which, to a stranger,
Unguided and unfriended, often prove
Rough and inhospitable.

Twelfth Night.

THERE was a little attempt at preparation, now that the dinner hour was arrived, which showed that, in the opinion of his few but faithful domestics, the good Knight had returned in triumph to his home.

The great tankard, exhibiting in bas-relief the figure of Michael subduing the Arch-enemy, was placed on the table, and Joceline and Phœbe dutifully attended; the one behind the chair of Sir Henry, the other to wait upon her young mistress, and both to make out, by formal and regular observance, the want of a more numerous train.

" A health to King Charles !" said the old Knight, handing the massive tankard to his

daughter; "drink it, my love, though it be rebel ale which they have left us. I will pledge thee; for the toast will excuse the liquor, had Noll himself brewed it."

The young lady touched the goblet with her lip, and returned it to her father, who took a copious draught.

"I will not say blessing on their hearts," said he; "though I must own they drank good ale."

"No wonder, sir; they come lightly by the malt, and need not spare it," said Joceline.

"Say'st thou?" said the knight; "thou shalt finish the tankard thyself for that very jest's sake."

Nor was his follower slow in doing reason to the royal pledge. He bowed, and replaced the tankard, saying, after a triumphant glance at the sculpture, "I had a jibe with that same red-coat about the Saint Michael just now."

"Red-coat—ha! what red-coat?" said the hasty old man. "Do any of these knaves still lurk about Woodstock?—Quoit him down stairs instantly, Joceline.—Know we not Galloway nags?"

"So please you, he is in some charge here,

and will speedily begone.—It is he—he who had a rencontre with your honour in the wood."

"Ay, but I paid him off for it in the hall, as you yourself saw.—I was never in better fence in my life, Joceline. That same steward fellow is not so utterly black-hearted a rogue as the most of them, Joceline. He fences well—excellent well. I will have thee try a bout in the hall with him to-morrow, though I think he will be too hard for thee. I know thy strength to an inch."

He might say this with some truth; for it was Joceline's fashion, when called on, as sometimes happened, to fence with his patron, just to put forth as much of his strength and skill as obliged the Knight to contend hard for the victory, which, in the long run, he always contrived to yield up to him, like a discreet serving-man.

"And what said this round-headed steward of our great Saint Michael's standing cup?"

"Marry, he scoffed at our good saint, and said he was little better than one of the golden calves of Bethel. But I told him he should not talk so, until one of their own round-headed saints had given the devil as complete a cross-buttock

as Saint Michael had given him, as 'tis carved upon the cup there. I trow that made him silent enough. And then he would know whether your honour and Mistress Alice, not to mention old Joan and myself, since it is your honour's pleasure I should take my bed here, were not afraid to sleep in a house that had been so much disturbed. But I told him we feared no fiends or goblins, having the prayers of the Church read every evening."

"Joceline," said Alice, interrupting him, "wert thou mad? You know at what risk to ourselves and the good doctor the performance of that duty takes place."

"Oh, Mistress Alice," said Joceline, a little abashed, "you may be sure I spoke not a word of the doctor—No, no—I did not let him into the secret that we had such a reverend chaplain. —I think I know the length of this man's foot. We have had a jollification or so together. He is hand and glove with me, for as great a fanatic as he is."

"Trust him not too far," said the knight.

"Nay, I fear thou hast been imprudent already, and that it will be unsafe for the good man to come here after night-fall, as is proposed. These Independents have noses like blood-hounds, and can smell out a loyalist under any disguise."

"If your honour thinks so," said Joceline, "I'll watch for the doctor with good will, and bring him into the Lodge by the old condemned postern, and so up to this apartment; and sure this man Tomkins would never presume to come hither, and the doctor may have a bed in Woodstock Lodge, and he never the wiser; or, if your honour does not think that safe, I can cut his throat for you, and I would not mind it a pin."

"God forbid!" said the knight. "He is under our roof, and a guest, though not an invited one.—Go, Joceline; it shall be thy penance, for having given thy tongue too much license, to watch for the good doctor, and to take care of his safety while he continues with us. An October night or two in the forest would finish the good man."

"He's more like to finish our October than

our October is to finish him," said the keeper; and withdrew under the encouraging smile of his patron.

He whistled Bevis along with him to share in his watch; and having received exact information where the clergyman was most likely to be found, assured his master that he would give the most pointed attention to his safety. When the attendants had withdrawn, having previously removed the remains of the meal, the old knight, leaning back in his chair, encouraged pleasanter visions than had of late passed through his imagination, until by degrees he was surprised by actual slumber; while his daughter, not venturing to move but on tip-toe, took some needlework, and bringing it close by the old man's side, employed her fingers on this task, bending her eyes from time to time on her parent, with the affectionate zeal, if not the effective power, of a guardian angel. At length, as the light faded away, and night came on, she was about to cause candles to be brought. But, remembering how indifferent a couch Joceline's cottage had afforded, she could not think of interrupting the first sound and re-

freshing sleep which her father had enjoyed, in all probability, for the last two nights and days.

She herself had no other amusement, as she sat facing one of the great oriel windows, the same by which Wildrake had on a former occasion looked in upon Tomkins and Joceline while at their compotations, than watching the clouds, which a lazy wind sometimes chased from the broad disk of the harvest-moon, sometimes permitted to accumulate, and exclude her brightness. There is, I know not why, something peculiarly pleasing to the imagination, in contemplating the Queen of Night, when she is *wading*, as the expression is, among the vapours which she has not power to dispel, and which on their side are unable entirely to quench her lustre. It is the striking image of patient virtue, calmly pursuing her path through good report and bad report, having that excellence in herself which ought to command all admiration, but bedimmed in the eyes of the world, by suffering, by misfortune, by calumny.

As some such reflections, perhaps, were passing through Alice's imagination, she became sen-

sible, to her surprise and alarm, that some one had clambered up upon the window, and was looking into the room. The idea of supernatural fear did not in the slightest degree agitate Alice. She was too much accustomed to the place and situation; for folks do not see spectres in the scenes with which they have been familiar from infancy. But danger from marauders in a disturbed country was a more formidable subject of apprehension, and the thought armed Alice, who was naturally high-spirited, with such desperate courage, that she snatched a pistol from the wall, on which some fire-arms hung, and while she screamed to her father to awake, had the presence of mind to present it at the intruder. She did so the more readily, because she imagined she recognized in the visage, which she partially saw, the features of the woman whom she had met with at Rosamond's Well, and which had appeared to her peculiarly harsh and suspicious. Her father at the same time seized his sword and came forward, while the person at the window, alarmed at these demonstrations, and endeavouring to descend, missed footing, as had Cavaliero Wil-

drake before her, and went down to the earth with no small noise. Nor was the reception on the bosom of our common mother either soft or safe; for, by a most terrific bark and growl, they heard that Bevis had come up and seized on the party, ere he or she could gain their feet.

"Hold fast, but worry not," said the old knight.—"Alice, thou art the queen of wenches! Stand fast here till I run down and secure the rascal."

"For God's sake, no, my dearest father!" Alice exclaimed; "Joceline will be up immediately—Hark!—I hear him."

There was indeed a bustle below, and more than one light danced to and fro in confusion, while those who bore them called to each other, yet suppressing their voices as they spoke, as men who would only be heard by those they addressed. The individual who had fallen under the power of Bevis was most impatient in his situation, and called with least precaution.—"Here, Lee—Forester—take the dog off, else I must shoot him."

"If thou dost," said Sir Henry from the win-

dow, "I blow thy brains out on the spot—Thieves, Joceline, thieves! come up and secure this ruffian.—Bevis, hold on!"

"Back, Bevis; down, sir," cried Joceline.—"I am coming, I am coming, Sir Henry—Saint Michael, I shall go distracted!"

A terrible thought suddenly occurred to Alice,—could Joceline have become unfaithful, that he was calling Bevis off the villain, instead of encouraging the trusty dog to secure him? Her father, meantime, moved perhaps by some suspicion of the same kind, hastily stepped aside out of the moonlight, and pulled Alice close to him, so as to be invisible from without, yet so placed as to hear what should pass. The scuffle between Bevis and his prisoner seemed to be ended by Joceline's interference, and there was close whispering for an instant, as of people in consultation.

"All is quiet now," said one voice; "I will up and prepare the way for you."—And immediately a form presented itself on the outside of the window, pushed open the lattice, and sprung into the parlour. But almost ere his step was upon the floor, certainly before he had ob-

tained any secure footing, the old knight, who stood ready with his rapier drawn, made a desperate pass, which bore the intruder to the ground. Joceline, who clambered up next with a dark lantern in his hand, uttered a dreadful exclamation, when he saw what had happened, crying out, "Lord in heaven, he has slain his own son!"

"No, no—I tell you no," said the fallen young man, who was indeed young Albert Lee, the only son of the old knight—"I am not hurt.—No noise, on your lives—get lights instantly." At the same time, he started from the floor as quickly as he could, under the embarrassment of a cloak and doublet skewered as it were together by the rapier of the old knight, whose pass, most fortunately, had been diverted from the body of Albert by the interruption of his cloak, the blade passing right across his back, piercing the clothes, while the hilt coming against his side with the whole force of the lounge, had borne him to the ground.

Joceline all the while enjoined silence to every one, under the strictest conjurations. "Silence, as you would live long on earth—silence, as you

would have a place in heaven,—be but silent for a few minutes—all our lives depend on it."

Meantime he procured lights with inexpressible dispatch, and they then beheld that Sir Henry, on hearing the fatal words, had sunk back on one of the large chairs, without either motion, colour, or sign of life.

"Oh, brother, how could you come in this manner?" said Alice.

"Ask no questions—Good God! for what am I reserved?" He gazed on his father as he spoke, who, with clay-cold features rigidly fixed, and his arms extended in the most absolute helplessness, looked rather the image of death upon a monument, than a being in whom existence was only suspended. "Was my life spared," said Albert, raising his hands with a wild gesture to heaven, "only to witness such a sight as this!"

"We suffer what Heaven permits, young man—we endure our lives while Heaven continues them. Let me approach." The same clergyman who had read the prayers at Joceline's hut now came forward. "Get water," he said, "instantly." And the helpful hand and light foot of

Alice, with the ready-witted tenderness which never stagnates in vain lamentations while there is any room for hope, provided with incredible celerity all that the clergyman called for.

"It is but a swoon," he said, on feeling Sir Henry's palm,—"a swoon produced from the instant and unexpected shock. Rouse thee up, Albert; I promise thee it will be nothing save a syncope—A cup, my dearest Alice, and a ribbon, or a bandage—I must take some blood—some aromatics, too, if they can be had, my good Alice."

But while Alice procured the cup and bandage, stripped her father's sleeve, and seemed by intuition even to anticipate every direction of the reverend doctor, her brother, hearing no word, and seeing no sign of comfort, stood with both hands clasped and elevated into the air, a monument of speechless despair. Every feature in his face seemed to express the thought, "Here lies my father's corpse, and it is I whose rashness has slain him!"

But when a few drops of blood began to follow the lancet—at first falling singly, and then

trickling in a freer stream—when, in consequence of the application of cold water to the temples, and aromatics to the nostrils, the old man sighed feebly, and made an effort to move his limbs, Albert Lee changed his posture, at once to throw himself at the feet of the clergyman, and kiss, if he would have permitted him, his shoes and the hem of his raiment.

"Rise, foolish youth," said the good man, with a reproving tone; "must it be always thus with you?—Kneel to Heaven, not to the feeblest of its agents. You have been saved once again from great danger—would you deserve Heaven's bounty, remember you have been preserved for other purposes than you now think on. Begone you and Joceline, you have a duty to discharge; and be assured it will go better with your father's recovery that he see you not for a few minutes. Down—down to the wilderness, and bring in your attendant."

"Thanks, thanks, a thousand thanks," answered Albert Lee; and, springing through the lattice, he disappeared as unexpectedly as he

had entered—at the same time Joceline followed him, and by the same road.

Alice, whose fears for her father were now something abated, upon this new movement among the persons of the scene, could not resist appealing to her venerable assistant. "Good Doctor, answer me but one question—was my brother Albert here just now, or have I dreamed all that has happened for these ten minutes past? Methinks, but for your presence, I could suppose the whole had passed in my sleep—that horrible thrust—that death-like, corpse-like old man—that soldier in mute despair—I must indeed have dreamed."

"If you have dreamed, my sweet Alice," said the doctor, "I wish every sick nurse had your property, since you have been attending to our patient better during your sleep, than most of these old dormice can do when they are most awake. But your dream came through the gate of horn, my pretty darling, which you must remind me to explain to you at leisure. Albert has really been here, and will be here again."

"Albert," repeated Sir Henry, "who names my son?"

"It is I, my kind patron," said the doctor; "permit me to bind up your arm."

"My wound?—with all my heart, doctor," said Sir Henry, raising himself, and gathering his recollection by degrees. "I knew of old thou wert body-curer as well as soul-curer, and served my regiment for surgeon as well as chaplain.—But where is the rascal I killed?—I never made a fairer stramaçon in my life. The shell of my rapier struck against his ribs. So dead he must be, or my right hand has forgot its cunning."

"Nobody was slain," said the doctor; "we must thank God for that, since there were none but friends to slay. Here is a good cloak and doublet, though, wounded in a fashion which will require some skill in tailor-craft to cure. But I was your last antagonist, and took a little blood from you, merely to prepare you for the pleasure and surprise of seeing your son, who, though hunted pretty close, as you may believe, hath made his way from Worcester hither, where, with Joceline's assistance, we will care well enough for his safe-

ty. It was even for this reason that I pressed you to accept of your nephew's proposal to return to the old Lodge, where a hundred men might be concealed, though a thousand were making search to discover them. Never such a place for hide-and-seek, as I shall make good when I can find means to publish my Wonders of Woodstock."

"But, my son—my dear son," said the knight, "shall I not then instantly see him! and wherefore did you not forewarn me of this joyful event?"

"Because I was uncertain of his motions," said the doctor, "and rather thought he was bound for the sea-side, and that it would be best to tell you of his fate when he was safe on board, and in full sail for France. We had appointed to let you know all when I came hither to-night to join you. But there is a red-coat in the house whom we care not to trust farther than we could not help. We dared not, therefore, venture in by the hall; and so, prowling round the building, Albert informed us, that an old prank of his, when a boy, consisted of entering by this win-

dow. A lad who was with us would needs make the experiment, as there seemed to be no light in the chamber, and the moon-light without made us liable to be detected. His foot slipped, and our friend Bevis came upon us."

"In good truth, you acted simply," said Sir Henry, "to attack a garrison without a summons. But all this is nothing to my son Albert—where is he?—Let me see him."

"But, Sir Henry, wait," said the doctor, "till your restored strength——"

"A plague of my restored strength, man!" answered the knight, as his old spirit began to awaken within him.—"Dost not remember, that I lay on Edgehill-field all night, bleeding like a bullock from five several wounds, and wore my armour within six weeks? and you talk to me of the few drops of blood that follow such a scratch as a cat's claw might have made!"

"Nay, if you feel so courageous," said the doctor, "I will fetch your son—he is not far distant."

So saying, he left the apartment, making a sign to Alice to remain, in case any symptoms of her father's weakness should return.

It was fortunate, perhaps, that Sir Henry never seemed to recollect the precise nature of the alarm, which had at once, and effectually as the shock of the thunder-bolt, for the moment suspended his faculties. Something he said more than once of being certain he had done mischief with that *stramaçon*, as he called it; but his mind did not recur to that danger, as having been incurred by his son. Alice, glad to see that her father appeared to have forgotten a circumstance so fearful, (as men often forget the blow, or other sudden cause, which has thrown them into a swoon,) readily excused herself from giving much light on the matter, by pleading the general confusion. And in a few minutes, Albert cut off all farther inquiry, by entering the room, followed by the doctor, and throwing himself alternately into the arms of his father and of his sister.

CHAPTER VIII.

The boy is—hark ye, sirrah—what's your name?—
Oh, Jacob—ay, I recollect—the same.

CRABBE.

The affectionate relatives were united as those who, meeting under great adversity, feel still the happiness of sharing it in common. They embraced again and again, and gave way to those expansions of the heart, which at once express and relieve the pressure of mental agitation. At length the tide of emotion began to subside; and Sir Henry, still holding his recovered son by the hand, resumed the command of his feelings which he usually practised.

"So you have seen the last of our battles, Albert," he said, "and the King's colours have fallen for ever before the rebels?"

"It is but even so," said the young man—"the last cast of the die was thrown, and, alas!

lost, at Worcester; and Cromwell's fortune carried it there, as it has wherever he has shown himself."

"Well—it can but be for a time—it can but be for a time," answered his father; "the devil is potent, they say, in raising and gratifying favourites, but he can grant but short leases.—And the King—the King, Albert—the King—in my ear—close, close!"

"Our last news were confident that he had escaped from Bristol."

"Thank God for that—thank God for that!" said the knight. "Where didst thou leave him?"

"Our men were almost all cut to pieces at the bridge," Albert replied; "but I followed his Majesty, with about five hundred other officers and gentlemen, who were resolved to die around him, until, as our numbers and appearance drew the whole pursuit after us, it pleased his Majesty to dismiss us, with many thanks and words of comfort to us in general, and some kind expressions to most of us in especial. He sent his royal greeting to you, sir, in particular, and said more than becomes me to repeat."

"Nay, I will hear it every word, boy," said

Sir Henry; "is not the certainty that thou hast discharged thy duty, and that King Charles owns it, enough to console me for all we have lost and suffered, and would'st thou stint me of it from a false shamefacedness?—I will have it out of thee, were it drawn from thee with cords!"

"It shall need no such compulsion," said the young man—"It was his Majesty's pleasure to bid me tell Sir Henry Lee, in his name, that if his son could not go before his father in the race of loyalty, he was at least following him closely, and would soon move side by side."

"Said he so?" answered the knight—"Old Victor Lee will look down with pride on thee, Albert!—But I forget—you must be weary and hungry."

"Even so, sir," said Albert; "but these are things which of late I have been in the habit of enduring for safety's sake."

"Joceline!—what ho, Joceline!"

The under-keeper entered, and received orders to get supper prepared directly.

"My son and Dr Rochecliffe are half starving," said the knight.

"And there is a lad, too, below," said Joce-

line; "a page, he says, of Colonel Albert's, whose belly rings cupboard too, and that to no common tune; for I think he could eat a horse, as the Yorkshireman says, behind the saddle. He had better eat at the sideboard; for he has devoured a whole loaf of bread and butter, as fast as Phœbe could cut it, and it has not staid his stomach for a minute—and truly I think you had better keep him under your own eyes, for the steward beneath might ask him troublesome questions if he went below—And then he is impatient, as all your gentlemen pages are, and is saucy among the women."

"Whom is it he talks of?—what page hast thou got, Albert, that bears himself so ill?" said Sir Henry.

"The son of a dear friend, a noble lord of Scotland, who followed the great Montrose's banner—afterwards joined the King in Scotland, and came with him as far as Wor'ster. He was wounded the day before the battle, and conjured me to take this youth under my charge, which I did, something unwillingly; but I could not refuse a father, perhaps on his death-bed, pleading for the safety of an only son."

"Thou hadst deserved an halter, hadst thou hesitated," said Sir Henry; "the smallest tree can always give some shelter,—and it pleases me to think the old stock of Lee is not so totally prostrate, but it may yet be a refuge for the distressed. Fetch the youth in;—he is of noble blood, and these are no times of ceremony—he shall sit with us at the same table, page though he be; and if you have not schooled him handsomely in his manners, he may not be the worse of some lessons from me."

"You will excuse his national drawling accent, sir," said Albert, "though I know you like it not."

"I have small cause, Albert," answered the knight—"small cause.—Who stirred up these disunions?—the Scots. Who strengthened the hands of Parliament, when their cause was well nigh ruined?—the Scots again. Who delivered up the King, their countryman, who had flung himself upon their protection?—the Scots again. But this lad's father, you say, has fought on the part of the noble Montrose; and such a man as the great Marquis may make amends for the degeneracy of a whole nation."

"Nay, father," said Albert, "and I must add, that though this lad is uncouth and wayward, and, as you will see, something wilful, yet the King has not a more zealous friend in England; and, when occasion offered, he fought stoutly, too, in his defence—I marvel he comes not."

"He hath taken the bath," said Joceline, "and nothing less would serve than that he should have it immediately—the supper, he said, might be got ready in the meantime; and he commands all about him as if he were in his father's old castle, where he might have called long enough, I warrant, without any one to hear him."

"Indeed?" said Sir Henry, "this must be a forward chick of the game, to crow so early.—What is his name?"

"His name?—it escapes me every hour, it is so hard a one," said Albert—"Kerneguy is his name—Louis Kerneguy; his father was Lord Killstewers, of Kincardineshire."

"Kerneguy, and Killstewers, and Kin—what d'ye call it?—Truly," said the knight, "these northern men's names and titles smack of their origin—they sound like a north-west wind, rumbling and roaring among heather and rocks."

"It is but the asperities of the Celtic and Saxon dialects," said Dr Rochecliffe, "which, according to Verstegan, still linger in those northern parts of the island.—But peace—here comes supper, and Master Louis Kerneguy."

Supper entered accordingly, borne in by Joceline and Phœbe, and after it, leaning on a huge knotty stick, and having his nose in the air like a questing hound,—for his attention was apparently more fixed on the good provisions that went before him, than anything else—came Master Kerneguy, and seated himself, without much ceremony, at the lower end of the table.

He was a tall, raw-boned lad, with a shock head of hair, fiery red, like many of his country, while the harshness of his national features was increased by the contrast of his complexion, turned almost black by the exposure to all sorts of weather, which, in that skulking and rambling mode of life, the fugitive royalists had been obliged to encounter. His address was by no means prepossessing, being a mixture of awkwardness and forwardness, and showing, in a remarkable degree, how a want of easy address may be consistent with an admirable stock of assurance. His face inti-

mated having received some recent scratches, and the care of Dr Rochecliffe had decorated it with a number of patches, which even enhanced its natural plainness. Yet the eyes were brilliant and expressive, and, amid his ugliness—for it amounted to that degree of irregularity—the face was not deficient in some lines which expressed both sagacity and resolution.

The dress of Albert himself was far beneath his quality, as the son of Sir Henry Lee, and commander of a regiment in the royal service; but that of his page was still more dilapidated. A disastrous green jerkin, which had been changed to a hundred hues by sun and rain, so that the original could scarce be discovered, huge clouterly shoes, leathern breeches—such as were worn by hedgers—coarse grey worsted stockings, were the attire of the honourable youth, whose limping gait, while it added to the ungainliness of his manner, showed, at the same time, the extent of his sufferings. His appearance bordered so much upon what is vulgarly called the queer, that even with Alice it would have excited some sense of ridicule, had not compassion been predominant.

The grace was said; and the young Squire of Ditchley, as well as Dr Rochecliffe, made an excellent figure at a meal, the like of which, in quality and abundance, did not seem to have lately fallen to their share. But their feats were child's-play to those of the Scotch youth. Far from betraying any symptoms of the bread and butter with which he had attempted to close the orifice of his stomach, his appetite appeared to have been sharpened by a nine days fast; and the knight was disposed to think that the very genius of famine himself, come forth from his native regions of the north, was in the act of honouring him with a visit, while, as if afraid of losing a moment's exertion, Master Kerneguy never looked either to right or left, or spoke a single word to any at table.

"I am glad to see that you have brought a good appetite for our country fare, young gentleman," said Sir Henry.

"Bread of gude! sir," said the page, "an ye'll find flesh, I'se find appetite conforming, ony day o' the year. But the truth is, sir, that the appeteesement has been coming on for three days or four, and the meat in this southland of yours

has been scarce, and hard to come by; so, sir, I'm making up for lost time, as the piper of Sligo said, when he eat a hail side o' mutton."

"You have been country-bred, young man," said the knight, who, like others of his time, held the reins of discipline rather tight over the rising generation; "at least, to judge from the youths of Scotland whom I have seen at his late Majesty's court, in former days;—they had less appetite, and more—more"—As he sought the qualifying phrase which might supply the place of "good manners," his guest closed the sentence in his own way—"And more meat, it may be—the better luck theirs."

Sir Henry stared and was silent. His son seemed to think it time to interpose—"My dear father," he said, "think how many years have run since the Thirty-eight, when the Scottish troubles first began, and I am sure that you will not wonder that, while the Barons of Scotland have been, for one cause or other, perpetually in the field, the education of their children at home must have been much neglected, and that young men of my friend's age know better about using a

broadsword, or tossing a pike, than about the decent ceremonials of society."

"The reason is a sufficient one," said the knight; "and, since thou sayest thy follower Kernigo can fight, we'll not let him lack victuals, a God's name.—See, he looks angrily still at yonder cold loin of mutton—for God's sake put it all on his plate!"

"I can bide the bit and the buffet," said the honourable Master Kerneguy—"a hungry tyke ne'er minds a blaud with a rough bane."

"Now, God ha' mercy, Albert, but if this be the son of a Scots peer," said Sir Henry to his son, in a low tone of voice, "I would not be the English ploughman who would change manners with him for his ancient blood, and his nobility, and his estate to boot, an he has one.—He has eaten, as I am a Christian, near four pounds of solid butcher's meat, and with the grace of a wolf tugging at the carcase of a dead horse.—Oh, he is about to drink at last—Soh!—he wipes his mouth, though,—and dips his fingers in the ewer—and dries them, I profess, with the napkin!—there is some grace in him, after all."

"Here is wussing all your vara gude healths!" said the youth of quality, and took a draught in proportion to the solids which he had sent before; he then flung his knife and fork awkwardly on the trencher, which he pushed back towards the centre of the table, extended his feet beneath it till they rested on their heels, folded his arms on his well-replenished stomach, and, lolling back in his chair, looked much as if he was about to whistle himself asleep.

"Soh!" said the Knight—"the honourable Master Kernigo hath laid down his arms.—Withdraw these things, and give us our glasses—Fill them around, Joceline; and if the devil or the whole Parliament were within hearing, let them hear Henry Lee of Ditchley drink a health to King Charles, and confusion to his enemies!"

"Amen!" said a voice from behind the door.

All the company looked at each other in astonishment, at a response so little expected. It was followed by a solemn and peculiar tap, such as a kind of free-masonry had introduced among royalists, and by which they were accustomed to make

themselves and their principles known to each other, when they met by accident.

"There is no danger," said Albert, knowing the sign—"it is a friend;—yet I wish he had been at a greater distance just now."

"And why, my son, should you wish the absence of one true man, who may, perhaps, wish to share our abundance, on one of those rare occasions, when we have superfluity at our disposal?—Go, Joceline, see who knocks—and, if a safe man, admit him."

"And if otherwise," said Joceline, "methinks I shall be able to prevent his troubling the good company."

"No violence, Joceline, on your life;" said Albert Lee; and Alice echoed, "For God's sake, no violence!"

"No unnecessary violence at least," said the good knight; "for if the time demands it, I will have it seen that I am master of my own house." Joceline Joliffe nodded assent to all parties, and went on tiptoe to exchange one or two other mysterious symbols and knocks, ere he opened the door. It may be here remarked, that this species

of secret association, with its signals of union, existed among the more dissolute and desperate class of cavaliers, men habituated to the dissipated life which they had been accustomed to in an ill-disciplined army, where everything like order and regularity was too apt to be accounted a badge of puritanism. These were the "roaring boys" who met in hedge ale-houses, and when they had by any chance obtained a little money or a little credit, determined to create a counter-revolution by declaring their sittings permanent, and proclaimed, in the words of one of their choicest ditties,—

> "We'll drink, till we bring
> In triumph back the king."

The leaders and gentry, of a higher description and more regular morals, did not indeed partake such excesses, but they still kept their eye upon a class of persons, who, from courage and desperation, were capable of serving on an advantageous occasion the fallen cause of royalty; and recorded the lodges and blind-taverns at which they met, as wholesale merchants know the houses of call of the mechanics whom they may have occasion to employ, and can tell where they may

find them when need requires. It is scarce necessary to add, that among the lower class, and sometimes even among the higher, there were men found capable of betraying the projects and conspiracies of their associates, whether well or indifferently combined, to the governors of the state. Cromwell, in particular, had gained some correspondents of this kind of the highest rank, and of the most undoubted character, among the royalists, who, if they made scruple of impeaching or betraying individuals who confided in them, had no hesitation in giving the government such general information as served to enable him to disappoint the purposes of any plot or conspiracy.

To return to our story. In much shorter time than we have spent in reminding the reader of these historical particulars, Joliffe had made his mystic communication; and, being duly answered as by one of the initiated, he undid the door, and there entered our old friend Roger Wildrake, round-head in dress, as his safety and his dependence on Colonel Everard compelled him to be, but that dress worn in a most cavalier-like manner, and forming a stronger contrast than

usual with the demeanour and language of the wearer, to which it was never very congenial.

His puritanic hat, the emblem of that of Ralpho in the prints to Hudibras, or, as he called it, his felt-umbrella, was set most knowingly on one side of the head, as if it had been a Spanish hat and feather; his straight square-caped sad-coloured cloak was flung gaily upon one shoulder, as if it had been of three-piled taffeta, lined with crimson silk; and he paraded his huge calf-skin boots, as if they had been silken hose and Spanish leather shoes, with roses on the instep. In short, the airs which he gave himself, of a most thorough-paced wild gallant and cavalier, joined to a glistening of self-satisfaction in his eye, and an inimitable swagger in his gait, which completely announced his thoughtless, conceited, and reckless character, formed a most ridiculous contrast to his gravity of attire.

It could not, on the other hand, be denied, that in spite of the touch of ridicule which attached to his character, and the loose morality which he had learned in the dissipation of town pleasures, and afterwards in the disorderly life of a soldier, Wildrake had points about him both to make him

feared and respected. He was handsome, even in spite of his air of debauched effrontery; a man of the most decided courage, though his vaunting rendered it sometimes doubtful; and entertained a sincere sense of his political principles, such as they were, though he was often so imprudent in asserting and boasting of them, as, joined with his dependence on Colonel Everard, induced prudent men to doubt his sincerity.

Such as he was, however, he entered the parlour of Victor Lee, where his presence was anything but desirable to the parties present, with a jaunty step, and a consciousness of deserving the best possible reception. This assurance was greatly aided by circumstances which rendered it obvious, that if the jocund cavalier had limited himself to one draught of liquor that evening, in terms of his vow of temperance, it must have been a very deep and long one.

"Save ye, gentlemen, save ye.—Save you, good Sir Henry Lee, though I have scarce the honour to be known to you.—Save you, worthy doctor, and a speedy resurrection to the fallen Church of England."

"You are welcome, sir," said Sir Henry Lee,

whose feelings of hospitality, and of the fraternal reception due to a royalist sufferer, induced him to tolerate this intrusion more than he might have done otherwise. "If you have fought or suffered for the King, sir, it is an excuse for joining us, and commanding our services in anything in our power—although at present we are a family-party.—But I think I saw you in waiting upon Master Markham Everard, who calls himself Colonel Everard.—If your message is from him, you may wish to see me in private?"

"Not at all, Sir Henry, not at all.—It is true as my ill hap will have it, that being on the stormy side of the hedge—like all honest men—you understand me, Sir Henry—I am glad, as it were, to gain something from my old friend and comrade's countenance—not by truckling or disowning my principles, sir—I defy such practices;—but, in short, by doing him any kindness in my power when he is pleased to call on me. So I came down here with a message from him to the old round-headed son of a ——(I beg the young lady's pardon, from the crown of her head down to the very toes of her slipper)—And so, sir, chancing as I was stumbling out in the dark, I heard you give

a toast, sir, which warmed my heart, sir, and ever will, sir, till death chills it;—and so I made bold to let you know there was an honest man within hearing."

Such was the self-introduction of Master Wildrake, to which the knight replied, by asking him to sit down, and take a glass of sack to his Majesty's glorious restoration. Wildrake, at this hint, squeezed in without ceremony beside the young Scotchman, and not only pledged his landlord's toast, but seconded its import, by volunteering a verse or two of his favourite loyal ditty,—"The King shall enjoy his own again." The heartiness which he threw into his song opened still farther the heart of the old knight, though Albert and Alice looked at each other with looks resentful of the intrusion, and desirous to put an end to it. The honourable Master Kerneguy either possessed that happy indifference of temper which does not deign to notice such circumstances, or he was able to assume the appearance of it to perfection, as he sat sipping sack, and cracking walnuts, without testifying the least sense that an addition had been made to the party. Wildrake, who liked the liquor and the company, showed no unwillingness

to repay his landlord, by being at the expense of the conversation.

"You talk of fighting and suffering, Sir Henry Lee—Lord help us, we have all had our share. All the world knows what Sir Henry Lee has done from Edgefield downwards, wherever a loyal sword was drawn, or a loyal flag fluttered.—Ah, God help us! I have done something too.—My name is Roger Wildrake of Squattlesea-mere, Lincoln—not that you are ever like to have heard it before, but I was captain in Lunsford's light-horse, and afterwards with Goring. I was a child-eater, sir—a babe-bolter."

"I have heard of your regiment's exploits, sir; and perhaps you may find I have seen some of them, if we should spend ten minutes together—And I think I have heard of your name too.—I beg to drink your health, Captain Wildrake of Squattlesea-mere, Lincolnshire."

"Sir Henry, I drink yours in this pint bumper, and upon my knee; and I would do as much for that young gentleman—(looking at Albert)—and the squire of the green cassock too, holding it for green, as the colours are not to my eyes altogether clear and distinguishable."

It was a remarkable part of what is called by theatrical folks the by-play of this scene, that Albert was conversing apart with Doctor Rochecliffe in whispers, even more than the divine seemed desirous of encouraging;—yet, to whatever their private conversation referred, it did not deprive the young Colonel from the power of listening to what was going forward in the party at large, and interfering from time to time, like a watch-dog, who can distinguish the slightest alarm, even when employed in the engrossing process of taking his food.

"Captain Wildrake," said Albert, "we have no objection—I mean my friend and I—to be communicative on proper occasions; but you, sir, who are so old a sufferer, must needs know, that at such casual meetings as this, men do not mention their names unless they are specially wanted. It is a point of conscience, sir, to be able to say, if your principal, Captain Everard or Colonel Everard, if he be a Colonel, should examine you upon oath, I did not know who the persons were whom I heard drink such and such toasts."

"Faith, I have a better way of it, worthy sir," answered Wildrake; "I never can, for the life

of me, remember that there were any such and such toasts drunk at all—It's a strange gift of forgetfulness I have."

"Well, sir," replied the younger Lee; "but we, who have unhappily more tenacious memories, would willingly abide by the more general rule."

"Oh, sir," answered Wildrake, "with all my heart. I intrude on no man's confidence, d—n me —and I only spoke for civility's sake, having the purpose of drinking your health in a good fashion —(Then he broke forth into melody)—

'Then let the health go round, a-round, a-round, a-round,
Then let the health go round;
For though your stocking be of silk,
Your knee shall kiss the ground, a-ground, a-ground, a-ground,
Your knee shall kiss the ground.'"

"Urge it no farther," said Sir Henry, addressing his son; "Master Wildrake is one of the old school—one of the tantivy boys; and we must bear a little, for if they drink hard they fought well. I will never forget how a party came up and rescued us clerks of Oxford, as they called the regiment I belonged to, out of a cursed embroglio during the attack on Brentford. I tell you we were enclosed with the cockneys' pikes both front and rear, and we should have come off but

ill had not Lunsford's light horse, the babe-eaters as they called them, charged up to the pike's point, and brought us off."

"I am glad you thought on that, Sir Henry," said Wildrake; "and do you remember what the officer of Lunsford's said?"

"I think I do," said Sir Henry smiling.

"Well then, did not he call out, when the women were coming down, howling like syrens as they were—'Have none of you a plump child that you could give us, to break our fast upon?'"

"Truth itself," said the knight; "and a great fat woman stepped forward with a baby, and offered it to the supposed cannibal."

All at the table, Master Kerneguy excepted, who seemed to think that good food of any kind required no apology, held up their hands in token of amazement.

"Ay," said Wildrake, "the——a-hem!—I crave the lady's pardon again, from tip of top-knot to hem of farthingale.—But the cursed creature proved to be a parish nurse, who had been paid for the child half a year in advance. Gad, I took the baby out of the bitch-wolf's hand; and I have contrived, though God knows I have lived in a

skeldering sort of way myself, to breed up bold Breakfast, as I call him, ever since.—It was paying dear for a jest though."

"Sir, I honour you for your humanity—Sir, I thank you for your courage—Sir, I am glad to see you here," said the good knight, his eyes watering almost to overflowing. "So you were the wild officer who cut us out of the toils?—Oh, sir, had you but stopped when I called on you, and allowed us to clear the streets of Brentford with our musketeers, we would have been at London Stone that day. But your good-will was the same."

"Ay, truly was it," said Wildrake, who now sat triumphant and glorious in his easy-chair; "And here is to all the brave hearts, sir, that fought and fell in that same storm of Brentford. We drove all before us like chaff, till the shops, where they sold strong waters, and other temptations, brought us up—Gad, sir, we, the babe-eaters, had too many acquaintances in Brentford, and our stout Prince Rupert was ever better at making way than drawing off. Gad, sir, for my own poor share, I did but go into the house of a poor widow lady, who maintained a charge of daughters, and whom I had known of old, to get my horse fed, a morsel of

meat, and so forth, when these cockney-pikes of the artillery ground, as you very well call them, rallied, and came in with their armed heads, as boldly as so many Cotswold rams. I sprang down stairs—got to my horse—but, egad, I fancy all my troop had widows and orphan maidens to comfort as well as I, for only five of us got together. We cut our way through successfully—and Gad, gentlemen, I carried my little Breakfast on the pommel before me; and there was such a hollowing and screeching, as if the whole town thought I was to kill, roast, and eat the poor child, so soon as I got to quarters. But devil a cockney charged up to my bonny bay, poor lass, to rescue little cake-bread; they only cried haro, and out upon me."

"Alas, alas!" said the knight, "we made ourselves seem worse than we were; and we were too bad to deserve God's blessing even in a good cause. But it is needless to look back—we did not deserve victories when God gave them, for we never improved them like good soldiers, or like Christian men; and so we gave these canting scoundrels the advantage of us, for they assumed, out of mere hypocrisy, the discipline and orderly

behaviour which we, who drew our swords in a better cause, ought to have practised out of true principle. But here is my hand, Captain. I have often wished to see the honest fellow who charged up so smartly in our behalf, and I reverence you for the care you took of the poor child. I am glad this dilapidated place has still some hospitality to offer you, although we cannot treat you to roasted babes or stewed sucklings—eh, Captain?"

"Troth, Sir Henry, the scandal was sore against us on that score. I remember Lacy, who was an old play-actor, and a lieutenant in ours, made drollery on it in a play which was sometimes acted at Oxford, when our hearts were something up, called, I think, the Old Troop." *

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* This curious old play may be consulted by the dramatic antiquary. A scene or two of it turns on the strange impression made on the country people, that the cavaliers actually eat children. It was written by Lacy, a player, who had served in this same Old Troop, which lay under such evil reputation. Miss Edgeworth has quoted a verse of a popular poem referring to the same prejudice:—

"The pest that came from Coventry,
Riding in a red rochet,
Had news to tell, how Lunsford fell,
A child's hand in his pocket."

It was not a small cause of the violent prejudices of the citizens

So saying, and feeling more familiar as his merits were known, he hitched his chair up against that of the Scottish lad, who was seated next him, and who, in shifting his place, was awkward enough to disturb, in his turn, Alice Lee, who sate opposite, and, a little offended, or at least embarrassed, drew her chair away from the table.

"I crave pardon," said the honourable Master Kerneguy; "but, sir," to Master Wildrake, "ye hae e'en garr'd me hurt the young lady's shank."

"I crave your pardon, sir, and much more that of the fair lady, as is reasonable; though, rat me, sir, if it was I set your chair a-trundling in that way. Zooks, sir, I have brought with me no plague, nor pestilence, nor other infectious disorder, that ye should have started away as if I had been a leper, and discomposed the lady, which I would have prevented with my life, sir. Sir, if ye be northern born, as your tongue bespeaks, egad it was I ran the risk in drawing near you, so there was small reason for you to bolt."

"Master Wildrake," said Albert, interfering,

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of London against King Charles, that he had attempted to put this same Lunsford, thought capable of such ferocious proceedings, into the government of the Tower of London.

"this young gentleman is a stranger as well as you, under protection of Sir Henry's hospitality, and it cannot be agreeable for my father to see disputes arise among his guests. You may mistake the young gentleman's quality from his present appearance—this is the Honourable Master Louis Kerneguy, sir, son of my Lord Kilstewers of Kincardineshire, one who has fought for the King, young as he is."

"No dispute shall rise through me, sir—none through me," said Wildrake; "your exposition sufficeth, sir.—Master Louis Girnigo, son of my Lord Kilsteer, in Gringardenshire, I am your humble slave, sir, and drink your health, in token that I honour you, and all true Scots who draw their Andrew Ferraras on the right side, sir."

"I'se beholden to you, and thank you, sir," said the young man, with some haughtiness of manner, which hardly corresponded with his rusticity; "and I wuss your health in a ceevil way."

Most judicious persons would have here dropped the conversation; but it was one of Wildrake's marked peculiarities, that he could never let matters stand when they were well. He continued to plague the shy, proud, and awkward lad with his

observations. "You speak your national dialect pretty strongly, Master Girnigo," said he, "but I think not quite the language of the gallants that I have known among the Scottish cavaliers —I knew, for example, some of the Gordons, and others of good repute, who always put an *f* for the *wh*, as *faat* for *what*, *fan* for *when*, and the like."

Albert Lee here interposed, and said, that the provinces of Scotland, like those of England, had their different modes of pronunciation.

"You are very right, sir," said Wildrake. "I reckon myself, now, a pretty good speaker of their cursed jargon—no offence, young gentleman; and yet, when I took a turn with some of Montrose's folks, in the South Hielands, as they call their beastly wildernesses, (no offence again,) I chanced to be by myself, and to lose my way, when I said to a shepherd-fellow, making my mouth as wide, and my voice as broad as I could, *whore am I ganging till*;—confound me if the fellow could answer me, unless, indeed, he was sulky, as the bumpkins will be now and then to the gentlemen of the sword."

This was familiarly spoken, and though partly

addressed to Albert, was still more directed to his immediate neighbour, the young Scotsman, who seemed, from bashfulness, or some other reason, rather shy of his intimacy. To one or two personal touches from Wildrake's elbow, administered during his last speech, by way of a practical appeal to him in particular, he only answered, "Misunderstandings were to be expected when men converse in national deealects."

Wildrake, now considerably drunker than he ought to have been in civil company, caught up the phrase, and repeated it:—"Misunderstanding, sir—Misunderstanding, sir!—I do not know how I came to construe that, sir; but to judge from the information of these scratches on your honourable visnomy, I should augur that you had been of late at misunderstanding with the cat, sir."

"You are mistaken, then, friend, for it was with the dowg," answered the Scotsman drily, and cast a look towards Albert.

"We had some trouble with the watch dogs in entering so late in the evening," said Albert, in explanation, "and this youth had a fall among some rubbish, by which he came by these scratches.—

And now, dear Sir Henry," said Dr Rochecliffe, "allow us to remind you of your gout, and our long journey. I do it the rather that my good friend your son has been, during the whole time of supper, putting questions to me aside, which had much better be reserved till to-morrow—May we therefore ask permission to retire to our night's rest?"

"These private committees in a merry meeting," said Wildrake, "are a solecism in breeding. They always put me in mind of the cursed committees at Westminster.—But shall we to roost before we rouse the night-owl with a catch?"

"Aha, canst thou quote Shakspeare?" said Sir Henry, pleased at discovering a new good quality in his acquaintance, whose military services were otherwise but just able to counterbalance the intrusive freedom of his conversation. "In the name of merry Will," he continued,—"whom I never saw, though I have seen many of his comrades, as Alleyn, Hemmings, and so on,—we will have a single catch, and one rouse about, and then to bed."

After the usual discussion about the choice of

the song, and the parts which each was to bear, they united their voices in trolling a loyal glee, which was popular among the party at the time, and in fact believed to be composed by no less a person than Doctor Rochecliffe himself.

GLEE FOR KING CHARLES.

Bring the bowl which you boast,
  Fill it up to the brim;
'Tis to him we love most,
  And to all who love him.
Brave gallants, stand up,
  And avaunt, ye base carles!
Were there death in the cup,
  Here's a Health to King Charles!

Though he wanders through dangers,
  Unaided, unknown,
Dependent on strangers,
  Estranged from his own;
Though 'tis under our breath,
  Amidst forfeits and perils,
Here's to honour and faith,
  And a Health to King Charles!

Let such honours abound
  As the time can afford,
The knee on the ground,
  And the hand on the sword;
But the time shall come round,
  When, 'mid Lords, Dukes, and Earls,
The loud trumpets shall sound
  Here's a Health to King Charles!

After this display of loyalty, and a final libation, the party took leave of each other for the night. Sir Henry offered his old acquaintance Wildrake a bed for the evening, who weighed the matter somewhat in this fashion: "Why, to speak truth, my patron will expect me at the borough—but then he is used to my staying out of doors a nights. Then there's the Devil, that they say haunts Woodstock; but, with the blessing of this reverend doctor, I defy him and all his works—I saw him not when I slept here twice before, and I am sure if he was absent then, he has not come back with Sir Henry Lee and his family. So I accept your courtesy, Sir Henry, and I thank you, as a cavalier of Lunsford should thank one of the fighting clerks of Oxon. God bless the King! I care not who hears it, and confusion to Noll and his red nose!" Off he went accordingly with a bottle-swagger, guided by Joceline, to whom Albert, in the meantime, had whispered, to be sure to quarter him far enough from the rest of the family.

Young Lee then saluted his sister, and, with the formality of those times, asked and received his father's blessing with an affectionate embrace. His page seemed desirous to imitate one part of

his example, but was repelled by Alice, who only replied to his offered salute with a curtsey. He next bowed his head in an awkward fashion to her father, who wished him a good night. "I am glad to see, young man," he said, "that you have at least learned the reverence due to age. It should always be paid, sir; because in doing so you render that honour to others which you will expect yourself to receive when you approach the close of your life. More will I speak with you, at leisure, on your duties as a page, which office in former days used to be the very school of chivalry; whereas of late, by the disorderly times, it has become little better than a school of wild and disordered license; which made rare Ben Jonson exclaim——"

"Nay, father," said Albert, interposing, "you must consider this day's fatigue, and the poor lad is almost asleep on his legs—to-morrow he will listen with more profit to your kind admonitions. —And you, Louis, remember at least one part of your duty—Take the candles and light us—here Joceline comes to show us the way. Once more, good night, good Doctor Rochecliffe—good night all."

CHAPTER IX.

Groom. Hail, noble prince!
King Richard. Thanks, noble peer!
The cheapest of us is a groat too dear.

Richard II.

ALBERT and his page were ushered by Joceline to what was called the Spanish Chamber, a huge old scrambling bed-room, rather in a dilapidated condition, but furnished with a large standing bed for the master, and a truckle-bed for the domestic, as was common at a much later period in old English houses, where the gentleman often required the assistance of a groom of the chambers to help him to bed, if the hospitality had been exuberant. The walls were covered with hangings of cordovan leather, stamped with gold, and representing fights between the

Spaniards and Moriscoes, bull-feasts, and other sports peculiar to the Peninsula, from which it took its name of the Spanish Chamber. These hangings were in some places entirely torn down, in others defaced and hanging in tatters. But Albert stopped not to make observations, anxious, it seemed, to get Joceline out of the room; which he achieved by hastily answering his offers of fresh fuel, and more liquor, in the negative, and returning, with equal conciseness, the under-keeper's good wishes for the evening. He at length retired, somewhat unwillingly, and as if he thought that his young master might have bestowed a few more words upon a faithful old retainer after so long absence.

Joliffe was no sooner gone, than, before a single word was spoken between Albert Lee and his page, the former hastened to the door, examined lock, latch, and bolt, and made them fast, with the most scrupulous attention. He superadded to these precautions that of a long screw-bolt, which he brought out of his pocket, and which he screwed on to the staple in such a manner as to render it impossible to withdraw it, or open the door, un-

less by breaking it down. The page held a light to him during the operation, which his master went through with much exactness and dexterity. But when Albert arose from his knee, on which he had rested during the accomplishment of this task, the manner of the companions was on the sudden entirely changed towards each other. The honourable Master Kerneguy, from a cubbish lout of a raw Scotsman, seemed to have acquired at once all the grace and ease of motion and manner, which could be given by an acquaintance of the earliest and most familiar kind with the best company of the time.

He gave the light he held to Albert, with the easy indifference of a superior, who rather graces, than troubles his dependent by giving him some slight service to perform. Albert, with the greatest appearance of deference, assumed in his turn the character of torch-bearer, and lighted his page across the chamber, without turning his back upon him as he did so. He then set the light on a table by the bed-side, and approaching the young man with deep reverence, received from him the soiled green jacket, with the same profound respect as

if he had been a first lord of the bed-chamber, or other officer of the household of the highest distinction, disrobing his Sovereign of the Mantle of the Garter. The person to whom this ceremony was addressed endured it for a minute or two with profound gravity, and then bursting out a-laughing, exclaimed to Albert, "What a devil means all this formality?—thou complimentest with these miserable rags as if they were silks and sables, and with poor Louis Kerneguy as if he were the King of Great Britain?"

"And if your Majesty's commands, and the circumstances of the time, have made me for a moment seem to forget that you are my sovereign, surely I may be permitted to render my homage as such while you are in your own royal palace of Woodstock."

"Truly," replied the disguised Monarch, "the sovereign and the palace are not ill matched;—these tattered hangings and my ragged jerkin suit each other admirably.—*This* Woodstock!—*this* the bower where the royal Norman revelled with the fair Rosamond Clifford?—Why, it is a place of assignation for owls!" Then, suddenly recollect-

ing himself with his natural courtesy, he added, as if fearing he might have hurt Albert's feelings —"But the more obscure and retired, it is the fitter for our purpose, Lee; and if it does seem to be a roost for owls, as there is no denying, why, we know it has nevertheless brought up eagles."

He threw himself as he spoke upon a chair, and indolently, but gracefully, received the kind offices of Albert, who undid the coarse buttonings of his leathern gamashes which defended his legs, and spoke to him the whilst :—"What a fine specimen of the olden time is your father, Sir Henry! It is strange I should not have seen him before ;—but I heard my father often speak of him as being among the flower of our real old English gentry. By the mode in which he began to school me, I can guess you had a tight taskmaster of him, Albert—I warrant you never wore hat in his presence, eh?"

"I never cocked it at least in his presence, please your Majesty, as I have seen some youngsters do," answered Albert; "indeed if I had, it must have been a stout beaver to have saved me from a broken head."

"Oh, I doubt it not," replied the King; "a fine old gentleman—but with that methinks in his countenance, that assures you he would not hate the child in sparing the rod.—Hark ye, Albert—Suppose the same glorious Restoration come round,—which, if drinking to its arrival can hasten it, should not be far distant, for in that particular our adherents never neglect their duty,—suppose it come, therefore, and that thy father, as must be of course, becomes an Earl and one of the Privy Council, odd's fish, man, I shall be as much afraid of him as ever was my grandfather Henri Quatre of old Sully.—Imagine there were such a trinket now about the Court as the Fair Rosamond, or La Belle Gabrielle, what a work there would be of pages, and grooms of the chamber, to get the pretty rogue clandestinely shuffled out by the backstairs, like a prohibited commodity, when the step of the Earl of Woodstock was heard in the antichamber!"

"I am glad to see your Majesty so merry after your fatiguing journey."

"The fatigue was nothing, man," said Charles; "a kind welcome and a good meal made amends

for all that. But they must have suspected thee of bringing a wolf from the braes of Badenoch along with you, instead of a two-legged being, with no more than the usual allowance of mortal stowage for provisions. I was really ashamed of my appetite; but thou knowest I had eat nothing for twenty-four hours, save the raw egg you stole for me from the old woman's hen-roost—I tell thee, I blushed to show myself so ravenous before that high-bred and respectable old gentleman your father, and the very pretty girl your sister—or cousin, is she?"

"She is my sister," said Albert Lee, drily, and added, in the same breath, "Your Majesty's appetite suited well enough with the character of a raw northern lad.—Would your Majesty now please to retire to rest?"

"Not for a minute or two," said the King, retaining his seat. "Why, man, I have scarce had my tongue unchained to-day; and to talk with that northern twang, and besides, the fatigue of being obliged to speak every word in character,—Gad, it's like walking as the galley slaves do on the Continent, with a twenty-four-pound shot

chained to their legs—they may drag it along, but they cannot move with comfort. And, by the way, thou art slack in paying me my well-deserved tribute of compliments on my counterfeiting. —Did I not play Louis Kerneguy as round as a ring?"

"If your Majesty asks my serious opinion, perhaps I may be forgiven if I say your dialect was somewhat too coarse for a Scottish youth of high birth, and your behaviour perhaps a little too churlish. I thought too—though I pretend not to be skilful—that some of your Scotch sounded as if it were not genuine."

"Not genuine?—there is no pleasing thee, Albert.—Why, who should speak genuine Scotch but myself?—Was I not their King for a matter of ten months? and if I did not get knowledge of their language, I wonder what else I got by it. Did not east country, and south country, and west country, and Highlands, caw, croak, and shriek about me, as the deep guttural, the broad drawl, and the high sharp yelp predominated by turns?—Odd's fish, man, have I not been speeched

at by their orators, addressed by their senators, rebuked by their kirkmen? Have I not sate on the cuttie-stool, mon, (again assuming the northern dialect,) and thought it grace of worthy Mas John Gillespie, that I was permitted to do penance in mine own privy chamber, instead of the face of the congregation? and wilt thou tell me, after all, that I cannot speak Scotch enough to baffle an Oxon Knight and his family?"

"May it please your Majesty,—I began by saying I was no judge of the Scottish language."

"Pshaw—it is mere envy; just so you said at Norton's, that I was too courteous and civil for a young page—now you think me too rude."

"And there is a medium, if one could find it," said Albert, defending his opinion in the same tone in which the King attacked him; "so this morning, when you were in the woman's dress, you raised your petticoats rather unbecomingly high, as you waded through the first little stream; and when I told you of it, to mend the matter, you draggled through the next without raising them at all."

"O, the devil take the woman's dress!" said

Charles; "I hope I shall never be driven to that disguise again. Why, my ugly face was enough to put gowns, caps, and kirtles, out of fashion for ever—the very dogs fled from me—Had I passed any hamlet that had but five huts in it, I could not have escaped the cucking-stool. I was a libel on womanhood. These leathern conveniences are none of the gayest, but they are *propria quæ maribus*; and right glad am I to be repossessed of them. I can tell you too, my friend, I shall resume all my masculine privileges with my proper habiliments; and as you say I have been too coarse to-night, I will behave myself like a courtier to Mistress Alice to-morrow. I made a sort of acquaintance with her already, when I seemed to be of the same sex with herself, and found out there are other Colonels in the wind besides you, Colonel Albert Lee."

"May it please your Majesty," said Albert—and then stopped short, from the difficulty of finding words to express the unpleasant nature of his feelings. They could not escape Charles; but he proceeded without scruple. "I pique myself on seeing as far into the hearts of young ladies

as most folks, though God knows they are sometimes too deep for the wisest of us. But I mentioned to your sister in my character of fortune-teller,—thinking, poor simple man, that a country girl must have no one but her brother to dream about,—that she was anxious about a certain Colonel. I had hit the theme, but not the person; for I alluded to you, Albert; and I presume the blush was too deep ever to be given to a brother. So up she got, and away she flew from me, like a lapwing. I can excuse her—for, looking at myself in the well, I think if I had met such a creature as I seemed, I should have called fire and faggot against it.—Now, what think you, Albert—who can this Colonel be, that more than rivals you in your sister's affection?"

Albert, who well knew that the King's mode of thinking, where the fair sex was concerned, was far more gay than delicate, endeavoured to put a stop to the present topic, by a grave answer.

"His sister," he said, "had been in some measure educated with the son of her maternal uncle, Markham Everard; but as his father and he himself had adopted the cause of the roundheads, the

families had in consequence been at variance; and any projects which might have been formerly entertained, were of course long since dismissed on all sides."

"You are wrong, Albert, you are wrong," said the King, pitilessly pursuing his jest. "You Colonels, whether you wear blue or orange sashes, are too pretty fellows to be dismissed so easily, when once you have acquired an interest. But, Mistress Alice, so pretty, and who wishes the restoration of the King with such a look and accent as if she were an angel whose prayers must needs bring it down, must not be allowed to retain any thoughts of a canting roundhead—What say you—will you give me leave to take her to task about it?—After all, I am the party most concerned in maintaining true allegiance among my subjects; and if I gain the pretty maidens' good will, that of the sweethearts will soon follow. This was jolly King Edward's way—Edward the Fourth, you know. The king-making Earl of Warwick—the Cromwell of his day—dethroned him more than once; but he had the hearts of the

merry dames of London, and the purses and veins of the cockneys bled freely, till they brought him home again. How say you?—shall I shake off my northern slough, and speak with Alice in my own character, showing what education and manners have done for me, to make the best amends they can for an ugly face?"

"May it please your Majesty," said Albert, in an altered and embarrassed tone, "I did not expect——"

Here he stopped, not able to find words adequate at the same time to express his sentiments, and respectful enough to the King, while in his father's house, and under his own protection.

"And what is it that Master Lee does not expect?" said Charles, with marked gravity on his part.

Again Albert attempted a reply, but advanced no farther than, "I would hope, if it please your Majesty," when he again stopped short, his deep and hereditary respect for his sovereign, and his sense of the hospitality due to his misfortunes, preventing his giving utterance to his irritated feelings.

"And what does Colonel Albert Lee hope?" said Charles, in the same dry and cold manner in which he had before spoken.—"No answer?—Now, *I hope* that Colonel Lee does not see in a silly jest anything offensive to the honour of his family, since methinks that were an indifferent compliment to his sister, his father, and himself, not to mention Charles Stuart, whom he calls his King; and *I expect*, that I shall not be so hardly construed, as to be supposed capable of forgetting that Mistress Alice Lee is the daughter of my faithful subject and host, and the sister of my guide and preserver.—Come, come, Albert," he added, changing at once to his naturally frank and unceremonious manner, "you forget how long I have been abroad, where men, women, and children, talk gallantry morning, noon, and night, with no more serious thought than just to pass away the time; and I forget, too, that you are of the old-fashioned English school, a son after Sir Henry's own heart, and don't understand raillery upon such subjects.—But I ask your pardon, Albert, sincerely, if I have really hurt you."

So saying, he extended his hand to Colonel Lee,

who, feeling he had been really too hasty in construing the King's jest in an unpleasant sense, kissed it with reverence, and attempted an apology.

"Not a word—not a word," said the good-natured Prince, raising his penitent adherent as he attempted to kneel, "we understand each other. You are somewhat afraid of the gay reputation which I acquired in Scotland; but I assure you, I will be as stupid as you, or your cousin Colonel, could desire, in presence of Mrs Alice Lee, and only bestow my gallantry, should I have any to throw away, upon the pretty little waiting-maid who attended at supper—unless you should have monopolized her ear for your own benefit, Colonel Albert."

"It is monopolized sure enough, though not by me, if it please your Majesty; but by Joceline Joliffe, the under-keeper, whom we must not disoblige, as we have trusted him so far already, and may have occasion to repose even entire confidence in him. I half think he suspects who Louis Kerneguy may in reality be."

"You are an engrossing set, you wooers of Woodstock," said the King, laughing. "Now,

if I had a fancy, as a Frenchman would not fail to have in such a case, to make pretty speeches to the deaf old woman I saw in the kitchen, as a *pis-aller*, I dare say I should be told that *her* ear was engrossed for Dr Rochecliffe's sole use?"

"I marvel at your Majesty's good spirits," said Albert, "that, after a day of danger, fatigue, and accidents, you should feel the power of amusing yourself thus."

"That is to say, the groom of the chambers wishes his Majesty would go to sleep?—Well, one word or two on more serious business, and I have done.—I have been completely directed by you and Rochecliffe—I have changed my disguise from female to male upon the instant, and altered my destination from Hampshire to take shelter here—Do you still hold it the wiser course?"

"I have great confidence in Dr Rochecliffe," replied Albert, "whose acquaintance with the scattered royalists enables him to gain the most accurate intelligence. His pride in the extent of his correspondence, and the complication of his plots and schemes for your Majesty's service, is indeed the very food he lives upon; but his sagacity

is equal to his vanity. I repose, besides, the utmost faith in Joliffe. Of my father and sister I would say nothing; yet I would not, without reason, extend the knowledge of your Majesty's person farther than it is indispensably necessary."

"Is it handsome in me," said Charles, pausing, "to withhold my full confidence from Sir Henry Lee?"

"Your Majesty heard of his almost death-swoon of last night—what would agitate him most deeply must not be hastily communicated."

"True; but are we safe from a visit of the red-coats—they have them in Woodstock as well as in Oxford?" said Charles.

"Dr Rochecliffe says, not unwisely," answered Lee, "that it is best sitting near the fire when the chimney smokes; and that Woodstock, so lately in possession of the sequestrators, and in the vicinity of the soldiers, will be less suspected, and more carelessly searched, than more distant corners, which might seem to promise more safety. Besides," he added, "Rochecliffe is in possession of curious and important news concerning the state of matters at Woodstock, highly favourable to your

Majesty's being concealed in the palace for two or three days, till shipping is provided. The Parliament, or usurping Council of State, had sent down sequestrators, whom their own evil consciences, assisted, perhaps, by the tricks of some daring cavaliers, had frightened out of the Lodge, without much desire to come back again. Then the more formidable usurper, Cromwell, had granted a warrant of possession to Colonel Everard, who had only used it for the purpose of repossessing his uncle in the Lodge, and who kept watch in person at the little borough, to see that Sir Henry was not disturbed."

"What! Mistress Alice's Colonel?" said the King—"that sounds alarming;—for grant that he keeps the other fellows at bay, think you not, Master Albert, he will not have an hundred errands a-day to bring him here in person?"

"Dr Rochecliffe says," answered Lee, "the treaty between Sir Henry and his nephew binds the latter not to approach the Lodge, unless invited;—indeed, it was not without great difficulty, and strongly arguing the good consequences it might produce to your Majesty's cause, that my

father could be prevailed on to occupy Woodstock at all; but be assured he will be in no hurry to send an invitation to the Colonel."

"And be you assured that the Colonel will come without waiting for one," said Charles. "Folks cannot judge rightly where sisters are concerned—they are too familiar with the magnet to judge of its powers of attraction.—Everard will be here, as if drawn by cart-ropes—fetters, not to talk of promises, will not hold him—and then, methinks, we are in some danger."

"I hope not," said Albert. "In the first place, I know Markham is a slave to his word; besides, were any chance to bring him here, I think I could pass your Majesty upon him without difficulty, as Louis Kerneguy. Then, although my cousin and I have not been at one for these some years, I believe him incapable of betraying your Majesty; and lastly, if I saw the least danger of it, I would, were he ten times my mother's nephew, run my sword through his body, ere he had time to execute his purpose."

"There is but another question," said Charles, "and I will release you, Albert:—You seem to

think yourself secure from search. It may be so; but, in any other country, this tale of goblins which is flying about would bring down priests and ministers of justice to examine the reality of the story, and mobs of idle people to satisfy their curiosity."

"Respecting the first, sir, we hope and understand that Colonel Everard's influence will prevent any immediate inquiry, for the sake of preserving undisturbed the peace of his uncle's family; and as for any one coming without some sort of authority, the whole neighbours have much love and fear of my father, and are, besides, so horribly alarmed about the goblins of Woodstock, that fear will silence curiosity."

"On the whole, then," said Charles, "the chances of safety seem to be in favour of the plan we have adopted, which is all I can hope for in a condition where absolute safety is out of the question. The Bishop recommended Dr Rochecliffe as one of the most ingenious, boldest, and most loyal sons of the Church of England; you, Albert Lee, have marked your fidelity by a hundred proofs. To you and your local knowledge I submit my-

self.—And now, prepare our arms—alive I will not be taken ;—yet I will not believe that a son of the King of England, and heir of her throne, could be destined to danger in his own palace, and under the guard of the loyal Lees."

Albert Lee laid pistols and swords in readiness by the King's bed and his own ; and Charles, after some slight apology, took his place in the large and better bed, with a sigh of pleasure, as from one who had not lately enjoyed such an indulgence. He bid good night to his faithful attendant, who deposited himself in his truckle ; and both monarch and subject were soon fast asleep.

CHAPTER X.

Give Sir Nicholas Throlkeld praise ;
Hear it, good man, old in days,
Thou tree of succour and of rest
To this young bird that was distress'd ;
Beneath thy branches he did stay ;
And he was free to sport and play,
When falcons were abroad for prey.

WORDSWORTH.

THE fugitive Prince slept in spite of danger, with the profound repose which youth and fatigue inspire. But the young cavalier, his guide and guard, spent a more restless night, starting from time to time, and listening; anxious, notwithstanding Doctor Rochecliffe's assurances, to procure yet more particular knowledge concerning the state of things around them, than he had been yet able to collect.

He arose early after day-break; but although he moved with as little noise as was possible, the

slumbers of the haunted Prince were easily disturbed. He started up in his bed, and asked if there was any alarm.

"None, please your Majesty," replied Lee; "only, thinking on the questions your Majesty was asking last night, and the various chances there are of your Majesty's safety being endangered from unforeseen accidents, I thought of going thus early, both to communicate with Doctor Rochecliffe, and to keep such a look-out as befits the place, where are lodged for the time the Fortunes of England. I fear I must request of your Majesty, for your own gracious security, that you have the goodness to condescend to secure the door with your own hand after I go out."

"Oh talk not to Majesty, for Heaven's sake, dear Albert!" answered the poor King, endeavouring in vain to put a part of his clothes in order to traverse the room.—"When a King's doublet and hose are so ragged that he can no more find his way into them than he could have travelled through the forest of Deane without a guide, good faith! there should be an end of Majesty, until it chances to be better accommodated. Besides, there

is the chance of these big words bolting out at unawares, when there are ears to hear them whom we might think dangerous."

"Your commands shall be obeyed," said Lee, who had now succeeded in opening the door; from which he took his departure, leaving the King, who had hustled along the floor for that purpose, with his dress woefully ill arranged, to make it fast again behind him, and begging his Majesty in no case to open to any one, unless he or Rochecliffe were of the party who summoned him.

Albert then set out in quest of Doctor Rochecliffe's apartment, which was only known to himself and the faithful Joliffe, and had at different times accommodated that steady churchman with a place of concealment, when, from his bold and busy temper, which led him into the most extensive and hazardous machinations on the King's behalf, he had been strictly sought after by the opposite party. Of late, the inquest after him had died entirely away, as he had prudently withdrawn himself from the scene of his intrigues. Since the loss of the battle of Worcester, he had been afloat again, and more active than ever; and had, by friends

and correspondents, and especially the Bishop of ——, been the means of directing the King's flight towards Woodstock, although it was not until the very day of his arrival that he could promise him a safe reception at that ancient mansion.

Albert Lee, though he revered both the undaunted spirit and ready resources of the bustling and undertaking churchman, felt he had not been enabled by him to answer some of the King's questions yesternight, in a way so distinct as one trusted with the King's safety ought to have done; and it was now his object to make himself personally acquainted, if possible, with the various bearings of so weighty a matter, as became a man on whom so much of the responsibility was likely to descend.

Even his local knowledge was scarce adequate to find the Doctor's secret apartment, had he not traced his way after a genial flavour of roasted game through divers blind passages, and up and down certain very useless stairs, through cupboards and hatchways, and so forth, to a species of sanctum sanctorum, where Joceline Joliffe was ministering to the good doctor a solemn breakfast of wild-fowl, with a cup of small beer

stirred with a sprig of rosemary, which Doctor Rochecliffe preferred to all strong potations. Beside him sat Bevis on his tail, slobbering and looking amiable, moved by the rare smell of the breakfast, which had quite overcome his native dignity of disposition.

The chamber in which the doctor had established himself was a little octangular room, with walls of great thickness, within which were fabricated various issues, leading in different directions, and communicating with different parts of the building. Around him were packages with arms, and near him one small barrel, as it seemed, of gunpowder; many papers in different parcels, and several keys for correspondence in cypher; two or three scrolls covered with hieroglyphics were also beside him, which Albert took for plans of nativity; and various models of machinery, in which Doctor Rochecliffe was an adept. There were also tools of various kinds, masks, cloaks, and a dark lantern, and a number of other indescribable trinkets belonging to the trade of a daring plotter in dangerous times. Last, there was a casket with gold and silver coin of different countries,

which was left carelessly open, as if it were the least of Doctor Rochecliffe's concern, although his habits in general announced narrow circumstances, if not actual poverty. Close by the divine's plate lay a Bible and Prayer-book, with some proof sheets, as they are technically called, seemingly fresh from the press. There was also within the reach of his hand a dirk, or Scottish poniard, a powder-horn, and a musketoon, or blunderbuss, with a pair of handsome pocket-pistols. In the midst of this miscellaneous collection, the doctor sat eating his breakfast, with great appetite, as little dismayed by the various implements of danger around him, as a workman is when accustomed to the perils of a gunpowder manufactory.

"Soh, young gentleman," he said, getting up and extending his hand, "are you come to breakfast with me in good fellowship, or to spoil my meal this morning, as you did my supper last night, by asking untimely questions?"

"I will pick a bone with you, with all my heart," said Albert; "and if you please, doctor, I would ask some questions which seem not quite untimely."

So saying, he sat down, and assisted the doctor in giving a very satisfactory account of a brace of wild ducks and a leash of teal. Bevis, who maintained his place with great patience and insinuation, had his share of a collop, which was also placed on the well-furnished board; for, like most high-bred dogs, he declined eating water-fowl.

"Come hither then, Albert Lee," said the doctor, laying down his knife and fork, and plucking the towel from his throat, so soon as Joceline was withdrawn; "thou art still the same lad thou wert when I was thy tutor—never satisfied with having got a grammar rule, but always persecuting me with questions why the rule stood so, and not otherwise—over-curious after information which thou could'st not comprehend, as Bevis hungered and whined for the duck-wing, which he could not eat."

"I hope you will find me more reasonable, doctor," answered Albert; "and at the same time, that you will recollect I am not now *sub ferula*, but am placed in circumstances where I am not at liberty to act upon the *ipse dixit* of any

man, unless my own judgment be convinced. I shall deserve richly to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, should any misfortune happen by my misgovernment in this business."

"And it is therefore, Albert, that I would have thee trust the whole to me, without interfering. Thou sayest, forsooth, thou art not *sub ferula*; but recollect that while you have been fighting in the field, I have been plotting in the study—that I know all the combinations of the King's friends, ay, and all the motions of his enemies, as well as a spider knows every mesh of his web. Think of my experience, man. Not a cavalier in the land but has heard of Rochecliffe the Plotter. I have been a main limb in everything that has been attempted since forty-two—penned declarations, conducted correspondence, communicated with chiefs, recruited followers, commissioned arms, levied money, appointed rendezvous. I was in the Western Rising; and before that, in the City Petition, and in Sir John Owen's stir in Wales; in short, almost in every plot for the King, since Tomkins and Challoner's matter."

"But were not all these plots unsuccessful?"

said Albert; "and were not Tomkins and Challoner hanged, doctor?"

"Yes, my young friend," answered the doctor, gravely, "as many others have been with whom I have acted; but only because they did not follow my advice implicitly. You never heard that I was hanged myself."

"The time may come, doctor," said Albert; "The pitcher goes oft to the well—The proverb, as my father would say, is somewhat musty. But I, too, have some confidence in my own judgement; and, much as I honour the church, I cannot altogether subscribe to passive obedience. I will tell you in one word what points I must have explanation on; and it will remain with you to give it, or to return a message to the King that you will not explain your plan; in which case, if he acts by my advice, he will leave Woodstock, and resume his purpose of getting to the coast without delay."

"Well, then, thou suspicious monster, make thy demands, and, if they be such as I can answer without betraying confidence, I will reply to them."

"In the first place, then, what is all this story about ghosts, and witchcrafts, and apparitions? and do you consider it as safe for his Majesty to stay in a house subject to such visitations, real or pretended?"

"You must be satisfied with my answer *in verbo sacerdotis*—the circumstances you allude to will not give the least annoyance to Woodstock during the King's residence. I cannot explain farther; but for this I will be bound, at the risk of my neck."

"Then," said Lee, "we must take the doctor for bail that the devil will keep the peace towards our Sovereign Lord the King—good. Now there lurked about this house the greater part of yesterday, and perhaps slept here, a fellow called Tomkins—a bitter Independent, and a secretary, or something or other, to the regicide dog Desborough. The man is well known—a wild ranter in religious opinions, but in private affairs far-sighted, cunning, and interested even as any rogue of them all."

"Be assured we will avail ourselves of his crazy fanaticism to mislead his wicked cunning;—a

child may lead a hog, if it has wit to fasten a cord to the ring in its nose," replied the doctor.

"You may be deceived," said Albert; "the age has many such as this fellow, whose views of the spiritual and temporal world are so different, that they resemble the eyes of a squinting man; one of which, oblique and distorted, sees nothing but the end of his nose, while the other, instead of partaking the same defect, views strongly, sharply, and acutely, whatever is subjected to its scrutiny."

"But we will put a patch on the better eye," said the doctor, "and he shall only be allowed to speculate with the imperfect optic. You must know this fellow has always seen the greatest number, and the most hideous apparitions; he has not the courage of a cat in such matters, though stout enough when he hath temporal antagonists before him. I have placed him under the charge of Joceline Joliffe, who, betwixt plying him with sack and ghost-stories, would make him incapable of knowing what was done, if you were to proclaim the King in his presence."

"But why keep such a fellow here at all?"

"Oh, sir, content you;—he lies leaguer, as a

sort of ambassador for his worthy masters, and we are secure from any intrusion so long as they get all the news of Woodstock from trusty Tomkins."

"I know Joceline's honesty well," said Albert; "and if he can assure me that he will keep a watch over this fellow, I will so far trust in him. He does not know the depth of the stake, 'tis true, but that my life is concerned will be quite enough to keep him vigilant.—Well, then, I proceed :—What if Markham Everard comes down on us?"

"We have his word to the contrary," answered Rochecliffe—"his word of honour, transmitted by his friend;—Do you think it likely he will break it?"

"I hold him incapable of doing so," answered Albert; "and, besides, I think Markham would make no bad use of anything which might come to his knowledge—Yet God forbid we should be under the necessity of trusting any who ever wore the Parliament's colours in a matter of such dear concernment!"

"Amen!" said the doctor.—"Are your doubts silenced now?"

"I still have an objection," said Albert, "to yonder impudent rake-helly fellow, styling himself a cavalier, who pushed himself on our company last night, and gained my father's heart by a story of the storm of Brentford, which I dare say the rogue never saw."

"You mistake him, dear Albert—Roger Wildrake, although till of late I only knew him by name, is a gentleman, was bred at the Inns of Court, and spent his estate in the King's service."

"Or rather in the devil's service," said Albert. "It is such fellows as he, who, sunk from the license of their military habits into idle debauched ruffians, infest the land with riots and robberies, brawl in hedge ale-houses and cellars where strong waters are sold at midnight, and, with their deep oaths, their hot loyalty, and their drunken valour, make decent men abominate the very name of Cavalier."

"Alas!" said the doctor, "it is but too true; but what can you expect? When the higher and more qualified classes are broken down and mingled undistinguishably with the lower orders, they are apt to lose the most valuable marks of their qua-

lity in the general confusion of morals and manners—just as a handful of silver medals will become defaced and discoloured if jumbled about among the vulgar copper coin. Even the prime medal of all, which we royalists would so willingly wear next our very hearts, has not, perhaps, entirely escaped some deterioration—But let other tongues than mine speak on that subject."

Albert Lee paused deeply after having heard these communications on the part of Rochecliffe.—"Doctor," he said, "it is generally agreed, even by some who think you may occasionally have been a little over busy in putting men upon dangerous actions——"

"May God forgive them who entertain so false an opinion of me!" said the doctor.

"——That, nevertheless, you have done and suffered more in the King's behalf than any man of your function."

"They do me but justice there," said Doctor Rochecliffe—"absolute justice."

"I am therefore disposed to abide by your opinion, if, all things considered, you think it safe that we should remain at Woodstock."

"That is not the question," answered the divine.

"And what is the question then?" replied the young soldier.

"Whether any safer course can be pointed out. I grieve to say, that the question must be comparative, as to the point of option. Absolute safety is—alas the while!—out of the question on all sides. Now, I say Woodstock is, fenced and guarded as at present, by far the most preferable place of concealment."

"Enough. I give up to you the question, as to a person whose knowledge of such important affairs, not to mention your age and experience, is more intimate and extensive than mine can be."

"You do well," answered Rochecliffe; "and if others had acted with the like distrust of their own knowledge, and confidence in competent persons, it had been better for the age. This makes Understanding bar himself up within his fortalice, and Wit betake himself to his high tower." (Here he looked around his cell with an air of self-complacence.) "The wise man foreseeth the tempest, and hideth himself."

"Doctor," said Albert, "let our foresight serve others far more precious than either of us.—Let me ask you, if you have well considered whether our precious charge should remain in society with the family, or betake himself to some of the more hidden corners of the house?"

"Hum!—I think he will be safest as Louis Kerneguy, keeping himself close beside you——"

"I fear it will be necessary that I scout abroad a little, and show myself in some distant part of the country, lest, coming here in quest of me, they should find higher game."

"Pray do not interrupt me—Keeping himself close beside you or your father, in or near to Victor Lee's apartment, from which you are aware he can make a ready escape, should danger approach.—This occurs to me as best for the present—I hope to hear of the vessel to-day—tomorrow at farthest."

Albert Lee bid the active but opinionated man good morrow; admiring how this species of intrigue had become a sort of element in which the doctor seemed to enjoy himself, notwithstanding all that the poet has said concerning the horrors

which intervene betwixt the conception and execution of a conspiracy.

In returning from Doctor Rochecliffe's sanctuary, he met with Joceline, who was anxiously seeking him. "The young Scotch gentleman," he said, in a mysterious manner, "has arisen from bed, and, hearing me pass, he called me into his apartment."

"Well," replied Albert, "I will see him presently."

"And he asked me for fresh linen and clothes. Now, sir, he is like a man who is quite accustomed to be obeyed, so I gave him a suit which happened to be in a wardrobe in the west tower, and some of your linen to conform; and when he was dressed, he commanded me to show him to the presence of Sir Henry Lee and my young lady.—I would have said something, sir, about waiting till you came back, but he pulled me good-naturedly by the hair, (as, indeed, he has a rare humour of his own,) and told me, he was guest to Master Albert Lee, and not his prisoner;—so, sir, though I thought you might be displeased with me for giving him the means of stirring

abroad, and perhaps being seen by those who should not see him, what could I say?"

"You are a sensible fellow, Joceline, and comprehend always what is recommended to you.—This youth will not be controlled, I fear, by either of us; but we must look the closer after his safety—You keep your watch over that prying fellow the steward?"

"Trust him to my care—on that side have no fear.—But ah, sir! I would we had the young Scot in his old clothes again, for the riding-suit of yours which he now wears hath set him off in other-guess fashion."

From the manner in which the faithful dependent expressed himself, Albert saw that he suspected who the Scottish page in reality was; yet he did not think it proper to acknowledge to him a fact of such importance, secure as he was equally of his fidelity, whether explicitly trusted to the full extent, or left to his own conjectures. Full of anxious thought, he went to the apartment of Victor Lee, in which Joliffe told him he would find the party assembled. The sound of laughter, as he laid his hand on the lock of the

door, almost made him start, so singularly did it jar with the doubtful and melancholy reflections which engaged his own mind. He entered, and found his father in high good humour, laughing and conversing freely with his young charge, whose appearance was, indeed, so much changed to the better in externals, that it seemed scarce possible a night's rest, a toilette, and a suit of decent clothes, could have done so much in his favour in so short a time. It could not, however, be imputed to the mere alteration of dress, although that, no doubt, had its effect. There was nothing splendid in that which Louis Kerneguy (we continue to call him by his assumed name) now wore. It was merely a riding-suit of grey cloth, with some silver lace, in the fashion of a country gentleman of the time. But it happened to fit him very well, and to become his very dark complexion, especially as he now held up his head, and used the manners, not only of a well-behaved but of a highly-accomplished gentleman. When he moved, his clumsy and awkward limp was exchanged for a sort of shuffle, which, as it might be the consequence of a wound in those perilous times, had

rather an interesting than an ungainly effect. At least it was as genteel an expression that the party had been overhard travelled, as the most polite pedestrian could propose to himself.

The features of the Wanderer were harsh as ever, but his red shock peruke, for such it proved, was laid aside, his sable elf-locks were trained, by a little of Joceline's assistance, into curls, and his fine black eyes shone from among the shade of these curls, and corresponded with the animated, though not handsome, character of the whole head. In his conversation, he had laid aside all the coarseness of dialect which he had so strongly affected on the preceding evening; and although he continued to speak a little Scotch, for the support of his character as a young gentleman of that nation, yet it was not in a degree which either rendered his speech uncouth or unintelligible, but merely afforded a certain Doric tinge essential to the personage he represented. No person on earth could better understand the society in which he moved; exile had made him acquainted with life in all its shades and varieties—his spirits, if not uniform, were

elastic—he had that species of Epicurean philosophy, which, even in the most extreme difficulties and dangers, can in an interval of ease avail itself of the enjoyments of the moment—he was, in short, in youth and misfortune, as afterwards in his regal condition, a good-humoured but hard-hearted voluptuary—wise, save where his passions intervened—beneficent, save when prodigality had deprived him of the means, or prejudice of the wish, to confer benefits—his faults such as might often have drawn down hatred, but that they were mingled with so much urbanity, that the injured person felt it impossible to retain the full sense of his wrongs.

Albert Lee found the party, consisting of his father, sister, and the supposed page, seated by the breakfast-table, at which he also took his place. He was a pensive and anxious beholder of what passed, while the page, who had already completely gained the heart of the good old cavalier, by mimicking the manner in which the Scotch divines preached in favour of Ma gude Lord Marquis of Argyle and the Solemn League and Covenant, was now endeavouring to interest

the fair Alice by such anecdotes, partly of warlike and perilous adventure, as possessed the same degree of interest for the female ear which they have had ever since Desdemona's days. But it was not only of dangers by land and sea that the disguised page spoke; but much more, and much oftener, on foreign revels, banquets, balls, where the pride of France, of Spain, or of the Low Countries, was exhibited in the eyes of their most eminent beauties. Alice being a very young girl, who, in consequence of the Civil War, had been almost entirely educated in the country, and often in great seclusion, it was certainly no wonder that she should listen with willing ears, and a ready smile, to what the young gentleman, their guest, and her brother's protegé, told with so much gaiety, and mingled with such a shade of dangerous adventure, and occasionally of serious reflection, as prevented the discourse from being regarded as merely light and frivolous.

In a word, Sir Henry Lee laughed, Alice smiled from time to time, and all were well satisfied but Albert, who would himself, however, have been scarce able to allege a sufficient reason for his depression of spirits.

The materials of breakfast were at last removed, under the active superintendence of the neat-handed Phœbe, who looked over her shoulder, and lingered more than once, to listen to the fluent discourse of their new guest, whom, on the preceding evening, she had, while in attendance at supper, accounted one of the most stupid inmates to whom the gates of Woodstock had been opened since the times of Fair Rosamond.

Louis Kerneguy then, when they were left only four in the chamber, without the interruption of domestics, and the successive bustle occasioned by the discussion and removal of the morning meal, became apparently sensible, that his friend and ostensible patron Albert ought not altogether to be suffered to drop to leeward in the conversation, while he was himself successfully engaging the attention of those members of his family to whom he had become so recently known. He went behind his chair, therefore, and, leaning on the back, said with a good-humoured tone, which made his purpose entirely intelligible,

"Either my good friend, guide, and patron, has heard worse news this morning than he cares to

tell us, or he must have stumbled over my tattered jerkin and leathern hose, and acquired, by contact, the whole mass of stupidity which I threw off last night with those most dolorous garments. Cheer up, my dear Colonel Albert, if your affectionate page may presume to say so—you are in company with those whose society, dear to strangers, must be doubly so to you. Odd's fish, man, cheer up! I have seen you gay on a biscuit and a mouthful of water-cresses—don't let your heart fail you on Rhenish wine and venison."

"Dear Louis," said Albert, rousing himself into exertion, and somewhat ashamed of his own silence, "I have slept worse, and been astir earlier than you."

"Be it so," said his father; "yet I hold it no good excuse for your sullen silence. Albert, you have met your sister and me, so long separated from you, so anxious on your behalf, almost like mere strangers, and yet you are returned safe to us, and you find us well."

"Returned indeed—but for safety, my dear father, that word must be a stranger to us Wor-

cester folks for some time. However, it is not my own safety about which I am anxious."

"About whose, then, should you be anxious?—All accounts agree that the King is safe out of the dogs' jaws."

"Not without some danger though," muttered Louis, thinking of his encounter with Bevis on the preceding evening.

"No, not without danger," echoed the knight; "but, as old Will says,—

> 'There's such divinity doth hedge a king,
> That treason dares not peep at what it would.'

No, no—thank God, that's cared for; our Hope and Fortune is escaped, so all news affirm, escaped from Bristol—if I thought otherwise, Albert, I should be as sad as you are. For the rest of it, I have lurked a month in this house when discovery would have been death, and that is no longer since than after Lord Holland and the Duke of Buckingham's rising at Kingston; and hang me, if I thought once of twisting my brow into such a tragic fold as yours, but cocked my hat at misfortune as a cavalier should."

"If I might put in a word," said Louis, "it

would be to assure Colonel Albert Lee that I verily believe the King would think his own hap, wherever he may be, much the worse that his best subjects were seized with dejection on his account."

"You answer boldly on the King's part, young man," said Sir Henry.

"Oh, my father was meikle about the King's hand," answered Louis, recollecting his present character.

"No wonder, then," said Sir Henry, "that you have so soon recovered your good spirits and good breeding, when you heard of his Majesty's escape. Why, you are no more like the lad we saw last night, than the best hunter I ever had was like a dray-horse."

"Oh, there is much in rest, and food, and grooming," answered Louis. "You would hardly know the tired jade you dismounted from last night, when she is brought out prancing and neighing the next morning, rested, refreshed, and ready to start again—especially if the brute hath some good blood, for such pick up unco fast."

"Well, then, but since thy father was a courtier, and thou hast learned, I think, something of

the trade, tell us a little, Master Kerneguy, about him we love most to hear about—the King; we are all safe and secret, you need not be afraid. He was a hopeful youth; I trust his flourishing blossom now gives promise of fruit?"

As the knight spoke, Louis bent his eyes on the ground, and seemed at first uncertain what to answer. But admirable at extricating himself from such dilemmas, he replied, "That he really could not presume to speak on such a subject in the presence of his patron, Colonel Albert Lee, who must be a much better judge of the character of King Charles than he could pretend to be."

Albert was accordingly next assailed by the knight, seconded by Alice, for some account of his Majesty's character.

"I will speak but according to facts," said Albert; "and then I must be acquitted of partiality. If the King had not possessed enterprise and military skill, he never would have attempted the expedition to Worcester;—had he not had personal courage, he had not so long disputed the battle that Cromwell almost judged it lost. That he possesses prudence and patience, must be ar-

gued from the circumstances attending his flight; and that he has the love of his subjects is evident, since, necessarily known to many, he has been betrayed by none."

"For shame, Albert!" replied his sister; "is that the way a good cavalier doles out the character of his Prince, applying an instance at every concession, like a pedlar measuring linen with his rod?—Out upon you!—no wonder you were beaten, if you fought as coldly for your King as you now talk for him."

"I did my best to trace a likeness from what I have seen and known of the original, sister Alice," replied her brother.—"If you would have a fancy portrait, you must get an artist of more imagination than I have to draw it for you."

"I will be that artist myself," said Alice; "and, in *my* portrait, our Monarch shall show all that he ought to be, having such high pretensions—all that he must be, being so loftily descended—all that I am sure he is, and that every loyal heart in the kingdom ought to believe him."

"Well said, Alice," quoth the old knight.—

"Look thou upon this picture, and on this!—Here is our young friend shall judge. I wager my best nag—that is, I would wager him had I one left—that Alice proves the better painter of the two.—My son's brain is still misty, I think, since his defeat—he has not got the smoke of Worcester out of it. Plague on thee!—a young man, and cast down for one beating? Had you been banged twenty times like me, it had been time to look grave.—But come, Alice, forward; the colours are mixed on your pallet—forward with something that shall show like one of Vandyke's living portraits, placed beside the dull dry presentation there of our ancestor Victor Lee."

Alice, it must be observed, had been educated by her father in the notions of high, and even exaggerated loyalty, which characterized the cavaliers, and she was really an enthusiast in the royal cause. But besides, she was in good spirits at her brother's happy return, and wished to prolong the gay humour, in which her father had of late scarcely ever indulged.

"Well then," she said, "though I am no Apel-

les, I will try to paint an Alexander, such as I hope, and am determined to believe, exists in the person of our exiled sovereign, soon I trust to be restored. And I will not go farther than his own family. He shall have all the chivalrous courage, all the warlike skill, of Henry of France, his grandfather, in order to place him on the throne;—all his benevolence, love of his people, patience even of unpleasing advice, sacrifice of his own wishes and pleasures to the commonweal, that, seated there, he may be blest while living, and so long remembered when dead, that for ages after it shall be thought sacrilege to breathe an aspersion against the throne which he has occupied! Long after he is dead, while there remains an old man who has seen him, were the condition of that survivor no higher than a groom or a menial, his age shall be provided for at the public charge, and his gray hairs regarded with more distinction than an earl's coronet, because he remembers the Second Charles, the monarch of every heart in England!"

While Alice spoke, she was hardly conscious of the presence of any one save her father and

brother; for the page withdrew himself somewhat from the circle, and there was nothing to remind her of him. She gave the reins, therefore, to her enthusiasm, and as the tears glittered in her eye, and her beautiful features became animated, she seemed like a descended cherub proclaiming the virtues of a patriot monarch. The person chiefly interested in her description held himself back, as we have said, and concealed his own features, yet so as to preserve a full view of the beautiful speaker.

Albert Lee, conscious in whose presence this eulogium was pronounced, was much embarrassed; but his father, all whose feelings were flattered by the panegyric, was in rapture.

"So much for the *King*, Alice," he said; "and now for the *Man*."

"For the man," replied Alice in the same tone, "need I wish him more than the paternal virtues of his unhappy father, of whom his worst enemies have recorded, that if moral virtues and religious faith were to be selected as the qualities which merited a crown, no man could plead the possession of them in a higher or more indisputable de-

gree. Temperate, wise, and frugal, yet munificent in rewarding merit—a friend to letters and the muses, but a severe discourager of the misuse of such gifts—a worthy gentleman—a kind master—the best friend, the best father, the best Christian——" Her voice began to falter, and her father's handkerchief was already at his eyes.

"He was, girl—he was!" exclaimed Sir Henry; "but no more on't, I charge ye—no more on't—enough;—let his son but possess his virtues, with better advisers, and better fortunes, and he will be all that England, in her warmest wishes, could desire."

There was a pause after this; for Alice felt as if she had spoken too frankly and too zealously for her sex and youth. Sir Henry was occupied in melancholy recollections on the fate of his late sovereign, while Kerneguy and his supposed patron felt embarrassed, perhaps from a consciousness that the real Charles fell far short of his ideal character, as designed in such glowing colours. In some cases, exaggerated or unappropriate praise becomes the most severe satire.

But such reflections were not of a nature to be long willingly cherished by the person, to whom they might have been of great advantage. He assumed a tone of raillery, which is, perhaps, the readiest mode of escaping from the feelings of self-reproof. "Every cavalier," he said, "should bend his knee to thank Mistress Alice Lee for having made such a flattering portrait of the King their master, by laying under contribution for his benefit the virtues of all his ancestors;—only there was one point he would not have expected a female painter to have passed over in silence. When she made him, in right of his grandfather and father, a muster of royal and individual excellencies, why could she not have endowed him at the same time with his mother's personal charms?—Why should not the son of Henrietta Maria, the finest woman of her day, add the recommendations of a handsome face and figure to his internal qualities?—he had the same hereditary title to good looks as to mental qualifications; and the picture, with such an addition, would be perfect in its way—and God send it might be a resemblance!"

"I understand you, Master Kerneguy," said

Alice, "but I am no fairy, to bestow, as those do in the nursery tales, gifts which Providence has denied. I am woman enough to have made inquiries on the subject, and I know the general report is, that the King, to have been the son of such handsome parents, is unusually hard-favoured."

"Good God, sister!" said Albert, starting impatiently from his seat.

"Why, you yourself told me so," said Alice, surprised at the emotion he testified; "and you said——"

"This is intolerable," muttered Albert—"I must out to speak with Joceline without delay.—Louis," (with an imploring look to Kerneguy,) "you will surely come with me?"

"I would with all my heart," said Kerneguy, smiling maliciously; "but you see how I suffer still from lameness.—Nay, nay, Albert," he whispered, resisting young Lee's attempt to prevail on him to leave the room, "can you suppose I am fool enough to be hurt by this?—on the contrary, I have a desire of profiting by it."

"May God grant it!" said Lee to himself, as

he left the room—" it will be the first lecture you ever profited by; and the devil confound the plots and plotters who made me bring you to this place!" So saying, he carried his discontent forth into the Park.

CHAPTER XI.

For there, they say, he daily doth frequent
With unrestrained loose companions;
While he, young, wanton, and effeminate boy,
Takes on the point of honour, to support
So dissolute a crew.

Richard II.

The conversation which Albert had in vain endeavoured to interrupt, flowed on in the same course after he had left the room. It entertained Louis Kerneguy; for personal vanity, or an over sensitiveness to deserved reproof, were not among the faults of his character, and were indeed incompatible with an understanding, which, combined with more strength of principle, steadiness of exertion, and self-denial, might have placed Charles high on the list of English monarchs. On the other hand, Sir Henry listened with natural delight to the noble sentiments uttered by a being so beloved as his daughter. His own parts were

rather steady than brilliant; and he had that species of imagination which is not easily excited without the action of another, as the electrical globe only scintillates when rubbed against its cushion. He was well pleased, therefore, when Kerneguy pursued the conversation, by observing that Mistress Alice Lee had not explained how the same good fairy that conferred moral qualities, could not also remove corporeal blemishes.

"You mistake, sir," said Alice. "I confer nothing. I do but attempt to paint our King such as I *hope* he is—such as I am sure he *may* be, should he himself desire to be so. The same general report which speaks of his countenance as unprepossessing, describes his talents as being of the first order. He has, therefore, the means of arriving at excellence, should he cultivate them sedulously and employ them usefully—should he rule his passions and be guided by his understanding. Every good man cannot be wise; but it is in the power of every wise man, if he pleases, to be as eminent for virtue as for talent."

Young Kerneguy rose briskly, and took a turn

through the room; and ere the knight could make any observation on the singular vivacity in which he had indulged, he threw himself again into his chair, and said, in rather an altered tone of voice —"It seems, then, Mistress Alice Lee, that the good friends who have described this poor King to you, have been as unfavourable in their account of his morals as of his person?"

"The truth must be better known to you, sir," said Alice, "than it can be to me. Some rumours there have been which accuse him of a license, which, whatever allowance flatterers make for it, does not, to say the least, become the son of the Martyr—I shall be happy to have these contradicted on good authority."

"I am surprised at your folly," said Sir Henry Lee, "in hinting at such things, Alice; a pack of scandal, invented by the rascals who have usurped the government—a thing devised by the enemy."

"Nay, sir," said Kerneguy, laughing, "we must not let our zeal charge the enemy with more scandal than they actually deserve. Mistress Alice has put the question to me. I can only answer,

that no one can be more devotedly attached to the King than I myself,—that I am very partial to his merits and blind to his defects;—and that, in short, I would be the last man in the world to give up his cause where it was tenable. Nevertheless, I must confess, that if all his grandfather of Navarre's morals have not descended to him, this poor King has somehow inherited a share of the specks that were thought to dim the lustre of that great Prince—that Charles is a little soft-hearted, or so, where beauty is concerned.—Do not blame him too severely, pretty Mistress Alice; when a man's hard fate has driven him among thorns, it were surely hard to prevent him from trifling with the few roses he may find among them?"

Alice, who probably thought the conversation had gone far enough, rose while Master Kerneguy was speaking, and was leaving the room before he had finished, without apparently hearing the interrogation with which he concluded. Her father approved of her departure, not thinking the turn which Kerneguy had given to the discourse altogether fit for her presence; and, desirous civilly to break off the conversation, "I see,"

says, the household affairs will call my daught
hence; I will therefore challenge you, your
gentleman, to stretch your limbs in a little exe
cise with me, either at single rapier, or rapi
and poniard, back-sword, spadroon, or your n
tional weapons of broad-sword and target; for al
or any of which, I think we shall find implemen
in the hall."

It would be too high a distinction, Master Ke
neguy said, for a poor page to be permitted to tr
a passage of arms with a knight so renowned
Sir Henry Lee, and he hoped to enjoy so gre
an honour before he left Woodstock; but at th
present moment his lameness continued to giv
him so much pain, that he should shame himse
in the attempt.

Sir Henry then offered to read him a play
Shakspeare, and for this purpose turned up Kin
Richard II. But hardly had he commenced wit

"Old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster,"

egged permission to be allowed to saunter abro
r a little while, if Sir Henry Lee consider
e might venture without danger.

"I can answer for the two or three of our pe
le that are still left about the place," said S
Henry; "and I know my son has disposed the
as to be constantly on the watch. If you he
e bell toll at the Lodge, I advise you to con
raight home by the way of the King's oa
hich you see in yonder glade towering abo
e rest of the trees. We will have some one st
oned there to introduce you secretly into t
ouse."

The page listened to these cautions with t
npatience of a school-boy, who, desirous of e
ying his holiday, hears without marking t
dvice of tutor or parent, about taking care n
catch cold and so forth.

The absence of Alice Lee had removed
hich had rendered the interior of the Lod
greeable, and the mercurial young page fl

on his rapier, and threw his cloak, or rather that which belonged to his borrowed suit, about him, bringing up the lower part so as to muffle the face and show only the eyes over it; which was a common way of wearing them in those days, both in streets, in the country, and in public places, when men had a mind to be private, and to avoid in terruption from salutations and greetings in the market-place. He hurried across the open space which divided the front of the Lodge from the wood, with the haste of a bird escaped from the cage, which, though joyful at its liberation, is at the same time sensible of its need of protection and shelter. The wood seemed to afford these to the human fugitive, as it might have done to the bird in question.

When under the shadow of the branches, and within the verge of the forest, covered from observation, yet with power of surveying the front of the Lodge, and all the open ground before it, the supposed Louis Kerneguy meditated on his escape.

"What an infliction—to fence with a gouty old man, who knows not, I dare say, a trick of the

sword, which was not familiar in the days of old Vincent Saviolo! or, as a change of misery, to hear him read one of those wildernesses of scenes which the English call a play, from prologue to epilogue—from Enter the first to the final *Exeunt omnes*—an unparalleled horror—a penance which would have made a dungeon darker, and added dulness even to Woodstock."

Here he stopped and looked around, then continued his meditations—"So then, it was here that the gay old Norman secluded his pretty mistress—I warrant, without having seen her, that Rosamond Clifford was never half so handsome as that lovely Alice Lee. And what a soul there is in the girl's eye!—with what abandonment of all respects, save that expressing the interest of the moment, she poured forth her tide of enthusiasm! Were I to be long here, in spite of prudence, and half-a-dozen very venerable obstacles beside, I should be tempted to try to reconcile her to the indifferent visage of this same hard-favoured Prince.—Hard-favoured?—it is a kind of treason for one who pretends to so

much loyalty, to say so of the King's features, and in my mind deserves punishment. — Ah, pretty Mistress Alice! many a Mistress Alice before you has made dreadful exclamations on the irregularities of mankind, and the wickedness of the age, and ended by being glad to look out for apologies for their own share in them. But then her father—the stout old cavalier—my father's old friend—should such a thing befal, it would break his heart.—Break a pudding's-end—he has more sense. If I give his grandson a title to quarter the arms of England, what matter if a bar sinister is drawn across them?—Pshaw! far from an abatement, it is a point of addition—the heralds in their next visitation will place him higher in the roll for it. Then, if he did wince a little at first, does not the old traitor deserve it?—first, for his disloyal intention of pinching mine anointed body black and blue with his vile foils—and secondly, his atrocious complot with Will Shakspeare, a fellow as much out of date as himself, to read me to death with five acts of a historical play, or chronicle, 'being the piteous Life and Death of Richard the

Second?' Odd's fish, my own life is piteous enough, as I think; and my death may match it, for aught I see coming yet. Ah, but then the brother—my friend—my guide—my guard—So far as this little proposed intrigue concerns him, such practising would be thought not quite fair. But your bouncing, swaggering, revengeful brothers exist only on the theatre. Your dire revenge, with which a brother persecuted a poor fellow who had seduced his sister, or been seduced by her, as the case might be, as relentlessly as if he had trodden on his toes without making an apology, is entirely out of fashion, since Dorset killed the Lord Bruce many a long year since. Pshaw! when a King is the offender, the bravest man sacrifices nothing by pocketing a little wrong which he cannot personally resent. And in France, there is not a noble house, where each individual would not cock his hat an inch higher, if they could boast of such a left-handed alliance with the Grand Monarque."

Such were the thoughts which rushed through the mind of Charles, at his first quitting the Lodge of Woodstock, and plunging into the fo-

rest that surrounded it. His profligate logic, however, was not the result of his natural disposition, nor received without scruple by his sound understanding. It was a train of reasoning which he had been led to adopt from his too close intimacy with the witty and profligate youth of quality by whom he had been surrounded. It arose from the evil communication with Villiers, Wilmot, Sedley, and others, whose genius was destined to corrupt that age, and the Monarch on whom its character afterwards so much depended. Such men, bred amidst the license of civil war, and without experiencing that curb which in ordinary times the authority of parents and relations imposes upon the headlong passions of youth, were practised in every species of vice, and could recommend it as well by precept as by example, turning into pitiless ridicule all those nobler feelings which withhold men from gratifying lawless passion. The events of the King's life had also favoured his reception of this Epicurean doctrine. He saw himself, with the highest claims to sympathy and assistance, coldly treated by the Courts which he visited, rather as

a permitted suppliant, than an exiled Monarch. He beheld his own rights and claims treated with scorn and indifference; and, in the same proportion, he was reconciled to the hard-hearted and selfish course of dissipation, which promised him immediate indulgence. If this was obtained at the expense of the happiness of others, should he of all men be scrupulous upon the subject, since he treated others only as the world treated him?

But although the foundations of this unhappy system had been laid, the Prince was not at this early period so fully devoted to it as he was found to have become, when a door was unexpectedly opened for his restoration. On the contrary, though the train of gay reasoning which we have above stated, as if it had found vent in uttered language, did certainly arise in his mind, as that which would have been suggested by his favourite councillors on such occasions, he recollected that what might be passed over as a peccadillo in France or the Netherlands, or turned into a diverting novel or pasquinade by the wits of his own wandering Court, was likely to

have the aspect of horrid ingratitude and infamous treachery among the English gentry, and would inflict a deep, perhaps an incurable, wound upon his interest, among the more aged and respectable part of his adherents. Then it occurred to him—for his own interest did not escape him, even in this mode of considering the subject—that he was in the power of the Lees, father and son, who were always understood to be at least sufficiently punctilious on the score of honour; and if they should suspect such an affront as his imagination had conceived, they could be at no loss to find means of the most ample revenge, either by their own hands, or by those of the ruling faction.

"The risk of re-opening the fatal window at Whitehall, and renewing the tragedy of the Man in the Mask, were a worse penalty," was his final reflection, "than the old stool of the Scottish penance; and pretty though Alice Lee is, I cannot afford to intrigue at such a hazard. So, farewell, pretty maiden! unless, as sometimes has happened, thou hast a humour to throw thyself at thy King's feet, and then I am too magnani-

mous to refuse thee my protection.—Yet, when I think of the pale clay-cold figure of the old man, as he lay last night extended before me, and imagine the fury of Albert Lee raging with impatience, his hand on a sword which only his loyalty prevents him from plunging into his sovereign's heart,—nay, the picture is too horrible! Charles must for ever change his name to Joseph, even if he were strongly tempted; which may Fortune in mercy prohibit!"

To speak the truth of a Prince, more unfortunate in his early companions, and the callousness which he acquired by his juvenile adventures and irregular mode of life, than in his natural disposition, Charles came the more readily to this wise conclusion, because he was by no means subject to those violent and engrossing passions, to gratify which the world has been thought well lost. His amours, like many of the present day, were rather matters of habit and fashion, than of passion and affection; and, in comparing himself in this respect to his grandfather Henry IV., he did neither his ancestor nor himself perfect justice. He was, to parody

the words of a bard, himself actuated by the stormy passions which an intriguer often only simulates,—

> None of those who loved so kindly,
> None of those who loved so blindly.—

An amour was with him a matter of amusement, a regular consequence, as it seemed to him, of the ordinary course of things in society. He was not at the trouble to practise seductive arts, because he had seldom found occasion to make use of them; his high rank, and the profligacy of some of the female society with which he had mingled, rendering them unnecessary. Added to this, he had, for the same reason, seldom been crossed by the obstinate interference of relations, or even of husbands, who had generally seemed not unwilling to suffer such matters to take their course.

So that, notwithstanding his total looseness of principle, and systematic disbelief in the virtue of women and the honour of men, as connected with the character of their female relatives, Charles was not a person to have studiously introduced disgrace into a family, where a conquest might have been violently disputed, at-

tained with difficulty, and accompanied with general distress, not to mention the excitation of all fiercer passions against the author of the scandal.

But the danger of the King's society consisted in his being much of an unbeliever in the existence of such cases as were like to be embittered by remorse on the part of the principal victim, or rendered perilous by the violent resentment of her connexions or relatives. He had found such things treated on the continent as matters of ordinary occurrence, subject, in all cases where a man of high influence was concerned, to an easy arrangement; and he was really, generally speaking, sceptical on the subject of severe virtue in either sex, and apt to consider it as a veil assumed by prudery in women, and hypocrisy in men, to extort a higher reward for their complaisance.

While we are discussing the character of his disposition to gallantry, the Wanderer was conducted, by the walk he had chosen, through several whimsical turns, until at last it brought him under the windows of Victor Lee's apartments, where he descried Alice watering and ar-

ranging some flowers placed on the Oriel window, which was easily accessible by daylight, although at night he had found it a dangerous attempt to scale it. But not Alice only, her father also showed himself near the window, and beckoned him up. The family party seemed now more promising than before, and the fugitive Prince was weary of playing battledore and shuttlecock with his conscience, and much disposed to let matters go as chance should determine.

He climbed lightly up the broken ascent, and was readily welcomed by the old knight, who held activity in high honour. Alice also seemed glad to see the lively and interesting young man; and by her presence, and the unaffected mirth with which she enjoyed his sallies, he was animated to display those qualities of wit and humour, which nobody possessed in a higher degree.

His satire delighted the old gentleman, who laughed till his eyes ran over, as he heard the youth, whose claims to his respect he little dreamed of, amusing him with successive imitations of the Scottish Presbyterian clergyman, of the proud and

poor Hidalgo of the North, of the fierce and overweening pride and Celtic dialect of the mountain chief, with all of which his residence in Scotland had made him familiar. Alice also laughed and applauded, amused herself, and delighted to see that her father was so; and the whole party were in the highest glee, when Albert Lee entered, eager to find Louis Kerneguy, and to lead him away to a private colloquy with Doctor Rochecliffe, whose zeal, assiduity, and wonderful possession of information, had constituted him their master-pilot in those difficult times.

It is unnecessary to introduce the reader to the minute particulars of their conference. The information obtained was so far favourable, that the enemy seemed to have had no intelligence of the King's route towards the south, and remained persuaded that he had made his escape from Bristol, as had been reported, and as had indeed been proposed; but the master of the vessel prepared for the King's passage had taken the alarm, and sailed without his royal freight. His departure, however, and the suspicion of the service in which he was engaged, served to make the

belief general, that the King had gone off along with him.

But though this was cheering, the Doctor had more unpleasant tidings from the sea-coast, alleging great difficulties in securing a vessel, to which it might be fit to commit a charge so precious; and, above all, requesting his Majesty might on no account venture to approach the shore, until he should receive advice that all the previous arrangements had been completely settled.

No one was able to suggest a safer place of residence than that which he at present occupied. Colonel Everard was deemed certainly not personally unfriendly to the King, and Cromwell, as was supposed, reposed in Everard an unbounded confidence. The interior presented numberless hiding places, and secret modes of exit, known to no one but the ancient residents of the Lodge—nay, far better to Rochecliffe than to any of them; as, when Rector at the neighbouring town, his prying disposition as an antiquary had induced him to make very many researches among the old ruins—the results of which he was

believed, in some instances, to have kept to himself.

To balance these conveniences, it was no doubt true, that the Parliamentary Commissioners were still at no great distance, and would be ready to reassume their authority upon the first opportunity. But no one supposed such an opportunity was likely to occur; and all believed, as the influence of Cromwell and the army grew more and more predominant, that the disappointed Commissioners would attempt nothing in contradiction to his pleasure, but wait with patience an indemnification in some other quarter for their vacated commissions. Report, through the voice of Master Joseph Tomkins, stated, that they had determined, in the first place, to retire to Oxford, and were making preparations accordingly. This promised still farther to insure the security of Woodstock. It was therefore settled, that the King, under the character of Louis Kerneguy, should remain an inmate of the Lodge, until a vessel should be procured for his escape, at the port which might be esteemed the safest and most convenient.

CHAPTER XII.

The deadliest snakes are those which, twined 'mongst flowers,
Blend their bright colouring with the varied blossoms,
Their fierce eyes glittering like the spangled dew-drop;
In all so like what nature has most harmless,
That sportive innocence, which dreads no danger,
Is poison'd unawares.

Old Play.

CHARLES (we must now give him his own name) was easily reconciled to the circumstances which rendered his residence at Woodstock advisable. No doubt he would much rather have secured his safety by making an immediate escape out of England; but he had been condemned already to many uncomfortable lurking-places, and more disagreeable disguises, as well as to long and difficult journeys, during which, between pragmatical officers of justice belonging to the prevailing party, and parties of soldiers whose officers usually took on them to act upon their own warrant, risk of discovery had more than once be-

come very imminent. He was glad, therefore, of comparative repose, and of comparative safety.

Then it must be considered, that Charles had been entirely reconciled to the society at Woodstock since he had become better acquainted with it. He had seen, that, to interest the beautiful Alice, and procure a great deal of her company, nothing more was necessary than to submit to the humours, and cultivate the intimacy, of the old cavalier her father. A few bouts at fencing, in which Charles took care not to put out his more perfect skill, and full youthful strength and activity—the endurance of a few scenes from Shakspeare, which the knight read with more zeal than taste—a little skill in music, in which the old man had been a proficient—the deference paid to a few old-fashioned opinions, at which he laughed in his sleeve—were all-sufficient to gain for the disguised Prince an interest in Sir Henry Lee, and to conciliate in an equal degree the good-will of his lovely daughter.

Never were two young persons who could be said to commence this species of intimacy with such unequal advantages. Charles was a liber-

tine, who, if he did not in cold blood resolve upon prosecuting his passion for Alice to a dishonourable conclusion, was at every moment liable to be provoked to attempt the strength of a virtue, in which he was no believer. Then Alice, on her part, hardly knew even what was implied by the word libertine or seducer. Her mother had died early in the commencement of the Civil War, and she had been bred up chiefly with her brother and cousin; so that she had an unfearing and unsuspicious frankness of manner, upon which Charles was not unwilling or unlikely to put a construction favourable to his own views. Even Alice's love for her cousin—the first sensation which awakens the most innocent and simple mind to feelings of shyness and restraint towards the male sex in general—had failed to awaken such an alarm in *her* bosom. They were nearly related; and Everard, though young, was several years her elder, and had, from her infancy, been an object of her respect as well as of her affection. When this early and childish intimacy ripened into youthful love, confessed and returned, still it differed in some shades from the passion exist-

ing between lovers originally strangers to each other, until their affections have been united in the ordinary course of courtship. Their love was fonder, more familiar, more perfectly confidential; purer too, perhaps, and more free from starts of passionate violence, or apprehensive jealousy.

The possibility that any one could have attempted to rival Everard in her affection, was a circumstance which never occurred to Alice; and that this singular Scottish lad, whom she laughed with on account of his humour, and laughed at for his peculiarities, should be an object of danger or of caution, never once entered her imagination. The sort of intimacy to which she admitted Kerneguy was the same to which she would have received a companion of her own sex, whose manners she did not always approve, but whose society she found amusing.

It was natural that the freedom of Alice Lee's conduct, which arose from the most perfect indifference, should pass for something approaching to encouragement in the royal gallant's apprehension, and that any resolutions he had formed against being tempted to violate the hospitality

of Woodstock, should begin to totter, as opportunities for doing so became more frequent.

These opportunities were favoured by Albert's departure from Woodstock the very day after his arrival. It had been agreed in full council, with Charles and Rochecliffe, that he should go to visit his uncle Everard in the county of Kent, and, by showing himself there, should obviate any cause of suspicion which might arise from his residence at Woodstock, and remove any pretext for disturbing his father's family on account of their harbouring one who had been so lately in arms. He had also undertaken, at his own great personal risk, to visit different points on the sea-coast, and ascertain the security of different places for providing shipping for the King's leaving England.

These circumstances were alike calculated to procure the King's safety, and facilitate his escape. But Alice was thereby deprived of the presence of her brother, who would have been her most watchful guardian, but who had set down the King's light talk upon a former occasion to the gaiety of his humour, and would have thought

he had done his sovereign great injustice, had he seriously suspected him of such a breach of hospitality as a dishonourable pursuit of Alice would have implied.

There were, however, two of the household at Woodstock, who appeared not so entirely reconciled with Louis Kerneguy or his purposes. The one was Bevis, who seemed, from their first unfriendly rencontre, to have kept up a pique against their new guest, which no advances on the part of Charles were able to soften. If the page was by chance left alone with his young mistress, Bevis chose always to be of the party; came close by Alice's chair, and growled audibly when the gallant drew near her. "It is a pity," said the disguised Prince, "that your Bevis is not a bull-dog, that we might dub him a roundhead at once—He is too handsome, too noble, too aristocratic, to nourish those inhospitable prejudices against a poor houseless cavalier. I am convinced the spirit of Pym or Hampden has transmigrated into the rogue, and continues to demonstrate his hatred against royalty and all its adherents."

Alice would then reply, that Bevis was loyal in word and deed, and only partook her father's prejudices against the Scots, which, she could not but acknowledge, were tolerably strong.

"Nay, then," said the supposed Louis, "I must find some other reason, for I cannot allow Sir Bevis's resentment to rest upon national antipathy. So we will suppose that some gallant cavalier, who wended to the wars and never returned, has adopted this shape to look back upon the haunts he left so unwillingly, and is jealous at seeing even poor Louis Kerneguy drawing near to the lady of his lost affections."—He approached her chair as he spoke, and Bevis gave one of his deep growls.

"In that case, you had best keep your distance," said Alice, laughing, "for the bite of a dog, possessed by the ghost of a jealous lover, cannot be very safe." And the King carried on the dialogue in the same strain, which, while it led Alice to apprehend nothing more serious than the apish gallantry of a fantastic boy, certainly induced the supposed Louis Kerneguy to think that he had made one of those conquests

which often and easily fall to the share of sovereigns. Notwithstanding the acuteness of his apprehension, he was not sufficiently aware that the Royal Road to female favour is only open to monarchs when they travel in grand costume, and that when they woo incognito, their path of courtship is liable to the same windings and obstacles which obstruct the course of private individuals.

There was, besides Bevis, another member of the family, who kept a look-out upon Louis Kerneguy, and with no friendly eye. Phœbe Mayflower, though her experience extended not beyond the sphere of the village, yet knew the world much better than her mistress, and besides she was five years older. More knowing, she was more suspicious. She thought that odd-looking Scotch boy made more up to her young mistress than was proper for his condition of life; and, moreover, that Alice gave him a little more encouragement than Parthenia would have afforded to any such Jack-a-dandy, in the absence of Argalus—for the volume treating of the loves of these celebrated Arcadians was then the

favourite study of swains and damsels throughout merry England. Entertaining such suspicions, Phœbe was at a loss how to conduct herself on the occasion, and yet resolved she would not see the slightest chance of the course of Colonel Everard's true love being obstructed, without attempting a remedy. She had a peculiar favour for Markham herself; and, moreover, he was, according to her phrase, as handsome and personable a young man as was in Oxfordshire; and this Scotch scare-crow was no more to be compared to him than chalk was to cheese. And yet she allowed that Master Girnigy had a wonderfully well-oiled tongue, and that such gallants were not to be despised. What was to be done?—she had no facts to offer, only vague suspicion; and was afraid to speak to her mistress, whose kindness, great as it was, did not, nevertheless, encourage familiarity.

She sounded Joceline; but he was, she knew not why, so deeply interested about this unlucky lad, and held his importance so high, that she could make no impression on him. To speak to the old knight, would have been to raise a ge-

neral tempest. The worthy chaplain, who was at Woodstock grand referee on all disputed matters, would have been the damsel's most natural resource, for he was peaceful as well as moral by profession, and politic by practice. But it happened he had given Phœbe unintentional offence by speaking of her under the classical epithet of *Rustica Fidele*, the which epithet, as she understood it not, she held herself bound to resent as contumelious, and declaring she was not fonder of a *fiddle* than other folks, had ever since shunned all intercourse with Doctor Rochecliffe which she could easily avoid.

Master Tomkins was always coming and going about the house under various pretexts; but he was a roundhead, and she was too true to the cavaliers to introduce any of the enemy as parties to their internal discords;—besides, he had talked to Phœbe herself in a manner which induced her to decline everything in the shape of familiarity with him. Lastly, Cavaliero Wildrake might have been consulted; but Phœbe had her own reasons for saying, as she did with some emphasis, that Cavaliero Wildrake was an impudent London

rake. At length she resolved to communicate her suspicions to the party having most interest in verifying or confuting them.

"I'll let Master Markham Everard know, that there is a wasp buzzing about his honey-comb," said Phœbe; "and, moreover, that I know that this young Scotch Scape-grace shifted himself out of a woman's into a man's dress at Goody Green's, and gave Goody Green's Dolly a gold-piece to say nothing about it;—and no more she did to any one but me, and she knows best herself whether she gave change for the gold or not—But Master Louis is a saucy jackanapes, and like enough to ask it."

Three or four days elapsed while matters continued in this condition—the disguised Prince sometimes thinking on the intrigue which Fortune seemed to have thrown in his way for his amusement, and taking advantage of such opportunities as occurred to increase his intimacy with Alice Lee; but much oftener harassing Doctor Rochecliffe with questions about the possibility of escape, which the good man finding himself unable to answer, secured his leisure against royal

importunity, by retreating into the various unexplored recesses of the Lodge, known perhaps only to himself, who had been for nearly a score of years employed in writing the Wonders of Woodstock.

It chanced on the fourth day, that some trifling circumstance had called the knight abroad; and he had left the young Scotchman, now familiar in the family, alone with Alice, in the parlour of Victor Lee. Thus situated, he thought the time not unpropitious for entering upon a strain of gallantry, of a kind which might be called experimental, such as is practised by the Croats in skirmishing, when they keep bridle in hand, ready to attack the enemy, or canter off without coming to close quarters, as circumstances may recommend. After using for nearly ten minutes a sort of metaphysical jargon, which might, according to Alice's pleasure, have been interpreted either into gallantry, or the language of serious pretension, and when he supposed her engaged in fathoming his meaning, he had the mortification to find, by a single and brief question, that he had been totally unattended to, and that Alice

was thinking on anything at the moment rather than the sense of what he had been saying. She asked him if he could tell what it was o'clock, and this with an air of real curiosity concerning the lapse of time, which put coquetry wholly out of the question.

"I will go look at the sun-dial, Mistress Alice," said the gallant, rising and colouring, through a sense of the contempt with which he thought himself treated.

"You will do me a pleasure, Master Kerneguy," said Alice, without the least consciousness of the indignation she had excited.

Master Louis Kerneguy left the room accordingly, not, however, to procure the information required, but to vent his anger and mortification, and to swear, with more serious purpose than he had dared to do before, that Alice should rue her insolence. Good-natured as he was, he was still a prince, unaccustomed to contradiction, far less to contempt, and his self-pride felt, for the moment, wounded to the quick. With a hasty step he plunged into the Chase, only remembering his own safety so far as to choose the deeper

and sequestered avenues, where, walking on with the speedy and active step, which his recovery from fatigue now permitted him to exercise according to his wont, he solaced his angry purposes, by devising schemes of revenge on the insolent country coquette, from which no consideration of hospitality was in future to have weight enough to save her.

The irritated gallant passed

"The dial-stone, aged and green,"

without deigning to ask it a single question; nor could it have satisfied his curiosity if he had, for no sun happened to shine at the moment. He then hastened forward, muffling himself in his cloak, and assuming a stooping and slouching gait, which diminished his apparent height. He was soon involved in the deep and dim alleys of the wood, into which he had insensibly plunged himself, and was traversing it at a great rate, without having any distinct idea in what direction he was going, when suddenly his course was arrested, first by a loud hollo, and then by a summons to stand, accompanied by what seemed

still more startling and extraordinary, the touch of a cane upon his shoulder, imposed in a good-humoured but somewhat imperious manner.

There were few symptoms of recognition which would have been welcome at this moment; but the appearance of the person who had thus arrested his course, was least of all that he could have anticipated as timely or agreeable. When he turned, on receiving the signal, he beheld himself close to a young man, nearly six feet in height, well made in joint and limb, but the gravity of whose apparel, although handsome and gentlemanlike, and a sort of precision in his habit, from the cleanness and stiffness of his band to the unsullied purity of his Spanish-leather shoes, bespoke a love of order which was foreign to the impoverished and vanquished cavaliers, and proper to the habits of those of the victorious party, who could afford to dress themselves handsomely; and whose rule—that is such as regarded the higher and more respectable classes—enjoined decency and sobriety of garb and deportment. There was yet another weight against the Prince in the scale, and one still more characteristic of

the inequality in the comparison, under which he seemed to labour. There was strength in the muscular form of the stranger who had brought him to this involuntary parley, authority and determination in his brow, a long rapier on the left, and a poniard or dagger on the right side of his belt, and a pair of pistols stuck into it, which would have been sufficient to give the unknown the advantage, (Louis Kerneguy having no weapon but his sword,) even had his personal strength approached nearer than it did to that of the person by whom he was thus suddenly stopped.

Bitterly regretting the thoughtless fit of passion that brought him into his present situation, but especially the want of the pistols he had left behind, and which do so much to place bodily strength and weakness upon an equal footing, Charles yet availed himself of the courage and presence of mind, in which few of his unfortunate family had for centuries been deficient. He stood firm and without motion, his cloak still wrapped round the lower part of his face, to give time for explanation, in case he was mistaken for some other person.

This coolness produced its effect; for the other party said, with doubt and surprise on his part, "Joceline Joliffe, is it not?—if I know not Joceline Joliffe, I should at least know my own cloak."

"I am not Joceline Joliffe, as you may see sir," said Kerneguy, calmly, drawing himself erect to show the difference of size, and dropping the cloak from his face and person.

"Indeed!" replied the stranger, in surprise; "then, Sir Unknown, I have to express my regret at having used my cane in intimating that I wished you to stop. From that dress, which I certainly recognize for my own, I concluded you must be Joceline, in whose custody I had left my habit at the Lodge."

"If it had been Joceline, sir," replied the supposed Kerneguy, with perfect composure, "methinks you should not have struck so hard."

The other party was obviously confused by the steady calmness with which he was encountered. The sense of politeness dictated, in the first place, an apology for a mistake, when he thought he had been tolerably certain of the person. Mas-

ter Kerneguy was not in a situation to be punctilious; he bowed gravely, as indicating his acceptance of the excuse offered, then turned, and walked, as he conceived, towards the Lodge; though he had traversed the woods, which were cut with various alleys in different directions, too hastily to be certain of the real course which he wished to pursue.

He was much embarrassed to find that this did not get him rid of the companion whom he had thus involuntarily acquired. Walked he slow, walked he fast, his friend in the genteel but puritanic habit, strong in person, and well armed, as we have described him, seemed determined to keep him company, and, without attempting to join, or enter into conversation, never suffered him to outstrip his surveillance for more than two or three yards. The Wanderer mended his pace; but, although he was then, in his youth, as afterwards in his riper age, one of the best walkers in Britain, the stranger, without advancing his pace to a run, kept fully equal to him, and his persecution became so close and constant, and inevitable, that the pride and fear

of Charles were both alarmed, and he began to think that, whatever the danger might be of a single-handed rencontre, he would nevertheless have a better bargain of this tall satellite if they settled the debate betwixt them in the forest, than if they drew near any place of habitation, where the man in authority was likely to find friends and concurrence.

Betwixt anxiety, therefore, vexation and anger, Charles faced suddenly round on his pursuer, as they reached a small narrow glade, which led to the little meadow over which presided the King's Oak, the ragged and scathed branches and gigantic trunk of which formed a vista to the little wild avenue.

"Sir," said he to his pursuer, "you have already been guilty of one piece of impertinence towards me. You have apologised; and knowing no reason why you should distinguish me as an object of incivility, I have accepted your excuse without scruple. Is there anything remains to be settled betwixt us, which causes you to follow me in this manner? If so, I shall be glad to make it a subject of explanation or satisfaction, as the

case may admit of. I think you can owe me no malice; for I never saw you before to my knowledge. If you can give any good reason for asking it, I am willing to render you personal satisfaction. If your purpose is merely impertinent curiosity, I let you know that I will not suffer myself to be dogged in my private walks by any one."

"When I recognize my own cloak on another man's shoulders," replied the stranger drily, "methinks I have a natural right to follow, and see what becomes of it; for know, sir, though I have been mistaken as to the wearer, yet I am confident I had as good a right to stretch my cane across the cloak you are muffled in, as ever had any one to brush his own garments. If, therefore, we are to be friends, I must ask, for instance, how you came by that cloak, and where you are going with it? I shall otherwise make bold to stop you, as one who has sufficient commission to do so."

Oh, unhappy cloak, thought the Wanderer, ay, and thrice unhappy the idle fancy that sent me here with it wrapped around my nose, to pick

quarrels and attract observation, when quiet and secrecy were peculiarly essential to my safety!

"If you will allow me to guess, sir," continued the stranger, who was no other than Markham Everard, "I will convince you, that you are better known than you think for."

"Now, Heaven forbid!" prayed the party addressed, in silence, but with as much devotion as ever he applied to a prayer in his life. Yet even in this moment of extreme urgency, his courage and composure did not fail; and he recollected it was of the utmost importance not to seem startled, and to answer so as, if possible, to lead the dangerous companion with whom he had met, to confess the extent of his actual knowledge or suspicions concerning him.

"If you know me, sir," he said, "and are a gentleman, as your appearance promises, you cannot be at a loss to what accident you must attribute my wearing these clothes, which you say are yours."

"Oh, sir," replied Colonel Everard, his wrath in no sort turned away by the mildness of the stranger's answer, "we have learned our Ovid's

Metamorphoses, and we know for what purposes young men of quality travel in disguise—we know that even female attire is resorted to on certain occasions—We have heard of Vertumnus and Pomona."

The Monarch, as he weighed these words, again uttered a devout prayer, that this ill-looking affair might have no deeper root than the jealousy of some admirer of Alice Lee, promising to himself, that, devotee as he was to the fair sex, he would make no scruple of renouncing the fairest of Eve's daughters in order to get out of the present dilemma.

"Sir," he said, "you seem to be a gentleman. I have no objection to tell you as such, that I also am of that class."

"Or somewhat higher, perhaps?" said Everard.

"A gentleman is a term which comprehends all ranks entitled to armorial bearings—A duke, a lord, a prince, is no more than a gentleman; and if in misfortune, as I am, he may be glad if that general term of courtesy is allowed him."

"Sir," replied Everard, "I have no purpose

to entrap you to any acknowledgement fatal to your own safety. Nor do I hold it my business to be active in the arrest of private individuals, whose perverted sense of national duty may have led them into errors, rather to be pitied than punished by candid men. But if those who have brought civil war and disturbance into their native country, proceed to carry dishonour and disgrace into the bosom of families—if they attempt to carry on their private debaucheries to the injury of the hospitable roofs which afford them refuge from the consequences of their public crimes, do you think, my lord, that we shall bear it with patience?"

"If it is your purpose to quarrel with me," said the Prince, "speak it out at once like a gentleman. You have the advantage, no doubt, of arms, but it is not that odds which will induce me to fly from a single man. If, on the other hand, you are disposed to hear reason, I tell you in calm words, that I neither suspect the offence to which you allude, nor comprehend why you give me the title of my Lord."

"You deny, then, being the Lord Wilmot?" said Everard.

"I may do so most safely," said the Prince.

"Perhaps you rather style yourself Earl of Rochester? We heard that the issuing of some such patent by the King of Scots was a step which your ambition proposed."

"Neither lord nor earl am I, as sure as I have a christian soul to be saved. My name is——"

"Do not degrade yourself by unnecessary falsehood, my lord; and that to a single man, who, I promise you, will not invoke public justice to assist his own good sword should he see cause to use it. Can you look at that ring, and deny that you are Lord Wilmot?"

He handed to the disguised Prince a ring which he took from his purse, and his opponent instantly knew it for the same he had dropped into Alice's pitcher at the fountain, obeying only, though imprudently, the gallantry of the moment, in giving a pretty gem to a handsome girl, whom he had accidentally frightened.

"I know the ring," he said; "it has been in my possession. How it should prove me to be

Lord Wilmot, I cannot conceive; and beg to say, it bears false witness against me."

"You shall see the evidence," answered Everard; and resuming the ring, he pressed a spring ingeniously contrived in the collet of the setting, on which the stone flew back, and showed within it the cypher of Lord Wilmot beautifully engraved in miniature, with a coronet.—"What say you now, sir?"

"That probabilities are no proofs," said the Prince; "there is nothing here save what can be easily accounted for. I am the son of a Scottish nobleman, who was mortally wounded and made prisoner at Worcester fight. When he took leave, and bid me fly, he gave me the few valuables he possessed, and that among others. I have heard him talk of having changed rings with Lord Wilmot, on some occasion in Scotland, but I never knew the trick of the gem which you have shown me."

In this it may be necessary to say, Charles spoke very truly; nor would he have parted with it in the way he did, had he suspected it would be easily recognised. He proceeded after a minute's

pause :—"Once more, sir,—I have told you much that concerns my safety—if you are generous, you will let me pass, and I may do you on some future day as good service. If you mean to arrest me, you must do so here, and at your own peril, for I will neither walk farther your way, nor permit you to dog me on mine. If you let me pass I will thank you—if not, take to your weapon."

"Young gentleman," said Colonel Everard, "whether you be actually the gay young nobleman for whom I took you, you have made me uncertain; but, intimate as you say your family has been with him, I have little doubt that you are proficient in the school of debauchery, of which Wilmot and Villiers are professors, and their hopeful Master a graduated student. Your conduct at Woodstock, where you have rewarded the hospitality of the family by meditating the most deadly wound to their honour, has proved you too apt a scholar in such an academy. I intended only to warn you on this subject—it will be your own fault if I add chastisement to admonition."

" Warn me, sir !" said the Prince indignantly, " and chastisement ! This is presuming more on my patience than is consistent with your own safety—Draw, sir."—So saying, he laid his hand on his sword.

" My religion," said Everard, " forbids me to be rash in shedding blood—Go home, sir—be wise—consult the dictates of honour as well as prudence. Respect the honour of the House of Lee, and know there is one nearly allied to it, by whom your motions will be called to severe account."

" Aha !" said the Prince, with a bitter laugh, " I see the whole matter now—we have our roundheaded Colonel, our puritan cousin, before us—the man of texts and morals, whom Alice Lee laughs at so heartily. If your religion, sir, prevents you from giving satisfaction, it should prevent you from offering insult to a person of honour."

The passions of both were now fully up—they drew mutually, and began to fight, the Colonel relinquishing the advantage he could have obtained by the use of his fire-arms. A thrust of

the arm, or a slip of the foot, might, at the moment, have changed the destinies of Britain, when the arrival of a third party broke off the combat.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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